

Shahal to discuss Jerusalem issues

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has appointed Police and Energy Minister Moshe Shahal to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on issues connected to Jerusalem, an Israeli official said Friday. Mr. Shahal's spokeswoman, Tamara Paul-Cohen, said that he would meet next week with Faisal Al-Husseini, chosen by the PLO for the talks. "There are all kinds of problems associated with Jerusalem that were raised by the Palestinians in Cairo and the prime minister appointed Minister Shahal to deal with these," she told Reuters. Mr. Shahal and Mr. Husseini would discuss easing the Israeli closure on Arab East Jerusalem to allow Palestinians access for the purposes of trade, studies and medical services, she said. Mr. Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat agreed at their first working meeting in Cairo Wednesday to appoint negotiators to discuss Palestinian access to Jerusalem. Ms. Paul-Cohen said the status of Jerusalem would not be addressed in the talks between Mr. Shahal and Mr. Husseini. "Jerusalem itself is not a subject for negotiations," she said.

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Jordanian, Pakistani beheaded in S. Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — A Jordanian and a Pakistani were beheaded Friday for drug smuggling, the Interior Ministry announced. The Jordanian, identified as Attiyeh Ben Ayed Ben Kheleif Al Dehayem, was beheaded in Arar, a town close to the Saudi border with Jordan, after a Sharia court convicted him of smuggling hashish into the country. The Pakistani, Raheem Kol Kol Raheem, was beheaded in Riyadh where he was convicted for smuggling heroin, according to the ministry.

Israelis search for Palestinian guerrillas

TYRE (AFP) — The Israeli army Friday mounted a massive search in South Lebanon for three Palestinian members of the Islamic Jihad who wounded an Israeli soldier in an attack Thursday. Around 200 soldiers, backed by armoured cars, erected 14 roadblocks in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, and conducted minute searches of traffic passing through, a security source said. Israeli military sources said on Thursday that a motorised patrol came under automatic gunfire as it crossed the border from the "security zone" into Israel, with one soldier slightly wounded. The attackers were in the "security zone" when they opened fire. The Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement released Friday. Earlier Friday, the Israelis shelled ravines in the north of the "security zone" used by infiltrating groups, Lebanese police said.

Israeli official visited Qatar, daily says

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A senior Israeli official has paid a first visit to Qatar to discuss establishing economic links between the Jewish state and the Gulf monarchy, the daily Haaretz reported Friday. The visit followed a secret meeting last week between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jaber Al Thani at the United Nations in New York, the paper said. The Israeli minister also had talks in New York with Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Filali, according to the paper, which said Mr. Peres refused to confirm or deny the report. Government sources said the talks with Qatar showed that the Arabs were moving towards a thawing of relations with Israel, which only has diplomatic ties with Egypt.

Egypt detains opposition leader

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian police are holding an opposition party leader who published a newspaper article challenging President Hosni Mubarak to give a public accounting of arms contracts. State prosecutors said Friday that Helmy Murad, vice-president of the Socialist Labour Party, was detained on Thursday along with two journalists from the party newspaper, Al Shabab. Mr. Murad, a 74-year-old diabetic who was once minister of education, was kept overnight in a small cell in a Cairo police station. Officials would not say whether he faced charges.

General Assembly lifts S. Africa sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. General Assembly on Friday voted to lift economic sanctions against South Africa, in line with a call from African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela. Most sanctions will be lifted immediately, but an oil embargo adopted in 1986 will be maintained until the transitional executive council becomes operational, the resolution adopted by consensus by the assembly said.

Israel reviews its plans for pullout, settlers' 'security'

Combined agency dispatches

TEL AVIV — The army presented Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with plans Friday on how to protect Israeli settlers under its withdrawal from Jericho and the Gaza Strip, military sources said.

Mr. Rabin, who is also defense minister, heard the plans at a meeting ahead of Wednesday's negotiations with the Palestinians on the details of Israeli withdrawal and implementation of the Sept. 13 autonomy accord.

Military officials proposed laying roads bypassing Palestinian communities and refugee camps as well as building electric fences and observation posts in areas near the "most exposed" settlements in the Gaza Strip, they said.

The officials, including Chief of Staff Ehud Barak, also called for close cooperation between Israeli authorities, including the Shin Bet domestic intelligence service, and the new Palestinian police force.

The projects could cost Israel between \$180 to \$250 million, the sources said.

General Barak illustrated the plans with maps and slides during the meeting at the defense ministry in Tel Aviv, where several dozen right-wingers protested the autonomy accord.

Mr. Rabin then briefed his cabinet in the ministry building about the defense plans and about his meeting in Cairo last Wednesday with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Another planning session will be held at the chief of staff's office on Sunday.

Israel and the PLO are to begin two sets of detailed talks, on implementation of the autonomy plan and on Israeli troop withdrawal, in Egypt on the day the peace deal goes into effect.

The talks were announced during the Rabin-Arafat meeting.

"If all goes according to plan, in March '94 we will transfer Gaza and Jericho," Police Minister Moshe Shahal said.

"Until then we need to reach the most important arrangements on operations of (Israeli) security forces facing a Palestinian police force," Mr. Shahal told Israel Radio.

Under the terms of the accord for autonomy beginning in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, Jewish settlements are to remain in place and the army will be responsible for their security.

Mr. Rabin had asked the army to study ways to protect the some 120,000 settlers living in the territories.

Israel Radio reported that Mr. Rabin told his cabinet that Israeli officials were ready to negotiate, but that the PLO "does not appear to be organised" to start the talks.

The radio reported that Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will head the delegation negotiating the implementation of the plan.

But the appointment was not confirmed in the cabinet meeting because the Israelis are waiting for the PLO to announce the composition of its delegation, Housing Minister Benjamin Ben Eliezer said.

"We must first wait until the PLO publishes its list at the start of next week and we will decide then," Mr. Ben Eliezer told the radio.

Mr. Ben Eliezer also added that he had "not the slightest doubt" that Syria will continue to negotiate with Israel and will not hinder negotiations with the Palestinians in an active manner."

Gen. Uzi Dayan, nephew of the late Moshe Dayan, defence minister during the 1967 war when Israel seized the Gaza Strip and West Bank, is to head the delegation in the talks on troop withdrawal, officials said earlier.

The military talks will be held in the Egyptian Red Sea port of Taba.

A ministerial-level liaison committee overseeing implementation, headed by Mr. Peres, will meet in Cairo, according to the radio.

Cabinet Secretary Shimon Shves said that Mr. Arafat told Mr. Rabin "in Cairo Wednesday: 'Let's speak like cousins.'

After recalling the remark, Mr. Shves told the radio: "We have to continue living together with the Palestinians in the Middle East, and besides, as far as I can remember, we were cousins once."



Arab construction workers build on the roof of a building in Gaza City. Israelis and Palestinians will meet 13 Oct. start of the Gaza and Jericho

first self-rule, to settle the overall structure of the interim self-government, the structure of the (autonomy) council and the modality of its elections.

Fateh leaders meet in bid to shore up autonomy deal

Combined agency dispatches

TUNIS — Yasser Arafat and his supporters sought Friday to reassert their leadership in the face of opposition within the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to the peace accord.

Sources said Mr. Arafat sent Mahmoud Abbas, who signed the accord with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, to Morocco to try to persuade Khalid Al Hassan to attend the meetings but he refused.

PLO sources said members of the Central Committee of Mr. Arafat's Fateh faction opened an emergency meeting designed to show that they are in control of the movement.

The committee meeting was called by Mr. Arafat ahead of a meeting of the Palestine Central Council (PCC) due on Sunday. The council is a key policy-making body in which Arafat for political influence in the occupied territories.

Hani Al Hassan visited Damascus earlier this week for talks with the Syrian-backed Palestinian rejectionist groups who are trying to form a broad front in opposition to the peace deal.

Apart from the Syria-based rejectionists, the main opponent of the deal is the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement, which is vying with Mr. Arafat for political influence in the occupied territories.

So far, the rejectionists have failed to derail the peace accord.

In Amman, a statement by 26 Jordan-based PCC members voiced their rejection of the PLO-Israel peace accord and accused Mr. Arafat of trying to turn the council into a rubber stamp.

"We reiterate our rejection to the Gaza-Jericho agreement ... and we consider what was signed by the PLO leadership as not committing the Palestinian people or the PLO because it is inconsistent with national Palestinian principles," said the signatories, who belong to hard-line Palestinian factions.

Under the terms of the agreement, Israel will start transferring authority to the Palestinians in areas such as education, health, welfare, taxation and tourism later in the year.

Two senior leaders of Fateh who oppose the peace accord

did not attend the meeting. Khalid Al Hassan, a founder of the group with Mr. Arafat in the 1950s, and his brother Hani have criticised the agreement as a sellout to the Israelis.

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Clinton beefs up Somalia forces

Combined agency dispatches

THE BODIES of two American soldiers have been recovered from Sunday night's fierce street battle in the Somali capital, raising the death toll to 15, U.N. military spokesman said Friday.

Captain Tim McDavitt said the two bodies were brought in over the last couple of days to one of the U.S. compounds in Mogadishu. They have not been identified, he said.

Captain McDavitt also confirmed that a Red Cross delegate visited a captured American helicopter pilot, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant, and took away a letter from Mr. Durant wrote to his family. No information was available on Mr. Durant's condition.

The fighting Sunday night and early Monday also killed a Malaysian peacekeeper and wounded 77 Americans. At least three U.S. soldiers are still missing.

A diplomatic source in

Mogadishu said the body of a third American had been found. But Capt. McDavitt said he could not confirm that.

Confirmation that two bodies were recovered raises the U.S. death toll in the Somalia operation to 31 since it began last December. Ninety-nine peacekeepers from other nations also have died.

U.S. military reinforcements despatched by President Bill Clinton arrived in Mogadishu Friday with the first of their new armour as a Red Cross official saw the U.S. pilot held by Somalis gunned.

A Galaxy C5 cargo plane of the U.S. Force landed some of the soldiers at the airport here as well as Bradley M2 combat vehicles, under the watchful guard of Rangers of the U.S. Quick Reaction Force (QRF).

Red Cross official Suzanne Hofstetter meanwhile said she had seen Mr. Durant, finding him in "good spirits" when she was allowed to speak privately with him about 40 minutes.

She added that the International Committee of the Red Cross had recovered a body believed to be that of a U.S. Army Ranger killed on Sunday in the fierce battle that saw Durant's helicopter shot down.

Mr. Durant was "joking about food, about the lack of pizza," Ms. Hofstetter stated, adding that he was "strongly" and had "received medical treatment" for his injuries.

In Washington, President

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued on page 3)



Benzai Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), talks with her ally Hamid Nasir (AFP photo)

Pakistan tug-of-war moves to provinces after Bhutto gains

Combined agency dispatches

LAHORE, Pakistan — Pakistan's ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reached agreement with a spoiler party in southern Pakistan Friday in his battle to defeat election winner Benazir Bhutto in crucial provincial polls.

The two former prime ministers, both short of an absolute majority after Wednesday's general elections, were struggling Friday to forge alliances with smaller parties and independents and form a coalition government.

Results of elections for the four provincial parliaments on Saturday would be crucial in determining the strength of the future government, diplomats said.

"We have the majority in (southern) Sind and in Punjab," Ms. Bhutto said. "Punjab is the main province."

"It threw out the government of Nawaz Sharif and it threw out my government so it is very important to have stable governments in Punjab and Sind."

Ms. Bhutto was referring to the Punjab's revolt against Mr. Sharif earlier this year that finally forced him to resign in

July.

Acting President Wasim Sajad promulgated an ordinance banning members of parliament from switching sides. A flurry of floor-crossing this year undermined Mr. Sharif's government and contributed directly to his fall from office.

She urged Mr. Sharif to accept his defeat with grace. Diplomats said the results, giving the PPP 86 seats and Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) 72 in the 217-member National Assembly, raised the prospect of a weak government in a hung parliament.

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Middle East News

Iraq divulges arms suppliers

Combined Agency
despatches

BAGHDAD — Iraq provided the U.N. with information about arms suppliers on Friday, but a top U.N. envoy said Baghdad still had not fully complied with ceasefire terms.

"We have as a matter of fact last night received the answers at the Iraqi cabinet which has approved the release of data which we have requested," Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the United Nations Special Commission (UNESCOM) on Iraq, told Reuters.

He said his experts were attending a meeting to receive data on Iraq's former arms suppliers. Iraq had stalled on weapons procurement data for more than a year despite repeated U.N. requests.

"Of course it is not a matter of full compliance at this stage... there are more things to be done," Mr. Ekeus said.

He said the Iraqis needed to put forth more effort if they wanted a clean bill of health from him.

Asked whether Iraq's weapons file remains still open, he said: "Yes, it is indeed for us... in biological, chemical and missiles there are still more things to be done."

But concerning Iraq's nuclear capability, he said: "My feeling is it appears that IAEA thinks more has been achieved in that area."

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been entrusted with scrapping Iraq's nuclear programme. More than a year ago, senior IAEA inspectors said Iraq's once-secret nuclear programme was dead but cautioned against its revival in the absence of future control.

Baghdad wants the U.N. to remove sanctions which have blocked shipments of Iraqi oil, the country's main export. The sanctions were imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Mr. Ekeus, who arrived in Iraq last Friday, declined to describe Iraqi answers as final saying they needed to be analysed and assessed. "We need all our resources to evaluate," he said.

But he said Iraq's agreeing to supply the answers was a step in the right direction.

"It is a positive step indeed and the effort from our side has now started to gain some results," he said. "We think considerable progress has been achieved."

"In some areas there'll be talks about compliance, it will appear at least in bits and pieces," he said.

Under Gulf war ceasefire terms, Iraq is compelled to rid itself of all weapons of mass destruction, means to produce them and accept a strict U.N. mechanism to control and monitor its arms industry.

Full compliance on these issues may lead to an easing or lifting of the oil embargo on

Iraq imposed in response to its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Ekeus said he had no timetable in mind for a review of the sanctions.

He made clear that for Iraq to have the sanctions lifted or eased it needs clearance in several areas.

"On the technical side, of course, considerable progress has been achieved. But there are not only technical sides to be cleared, there is more work to be done," he said.

Mr. Ekeus said he would be meeting Iraq's deputy prime minister Tareq Aziz to sign a report concluding the work of this session.

Irqi Prime Minister Ahmad Hussein Khudayir has predicted that they would soon lift the embargo on Iraq.

Mr. Khudayir told reporters only "technical details" remained to be cleared in talks with U.N. negotiators. Any decision on sanctions depends on their report to the Security Council on Iraq's compliance with U.N. orders controlling Iraqi armaments.

"Of course the embargo will be lifted because the Iraqi people have done all that was required of us," Mr. Khudayir told a group of reporters accompanying former Turkish Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin on a two-day visit to Baghdad.

It was the first official comment from Baghdad on ongoing secret talks with Mr. Ekeus.

Information Minister Hamed Yousef Hummadi told the same group of reporters he expected the talks to be concluded in the next two days.

"We are hopeful because we have fulfilled all our commitments with regard to Resolution 687," Mr. Hummadi said. He referred to the U.N. cease-

fire resolution stripping Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and setting compensation from Baghdad for its invasion of Kuwait.

All that remained were "some technical discussions regarding future monitoring and other questions relating to Resolution 687," he said. "We expect these will be solved within the next week."

At the United Nations, Iraq urged the international community Thursday to support its demand for an end to the U.N. sanctions.

Irqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saad Al-Sabah also called for a lifting of the "no fly" bans enforced since the end of the Gulf war.

"A single power, i.e. the United States of America, has sought to control the manner in which the U.N. addresses international issues and steers it in accordance with U.S. interests," Mr. Sahaf said.

In a speech to the General Assembly that made no mention of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, he said the United States had "not found it enough to perpetrate the milit-

ary aggression it launched against Iraq on Jan. 17, 1991."

That date marked the start of air strikes by a U.S.-led coalition that a few weeks later drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

Mr. Al Sahaf said other acts of aggression had been carried out "under various false pretenses," including "some unfounded allegations claiming there was a conspiracy against the life of former President George Bush."

He said Iraq found itself in a situation not experienced by any other U.N. founding member, including sanctions which deprived its people of basic human needs, prevented the export of its natural resources — oil — froze its assets and prevented the use of its civil aircraft and ships.

Referring to U.N. weapons teams sent to find and scrap Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction, he said Iraq had cooperated, in compliance with Security Council resolutions, but the council had not fulfilled its obligation to lift the three-year-old sanctions.

"We hereby call upon all countries of the world to support our initiative for dialogue and understanding to prevail between the council and Iraq, so that this may lead without delay to the lifting of the unjust and iniquitous blockade imposed on our country, instead of resorting to the methods of coercion, threat and aggression," he said.

He urged the international community to consider Iraq's demand for its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity to be respected and for the removal of the "no fly zones" illegally imposed on parts of Iraq.

This was a reference to bans, enforced by the United States and its main Gulf war allies on Iraqi flights over northern and southern regions of the country.

Mr. Al Sahaf said the sanctions were "geared towards destroying Iraqi society" and that the importing even of paint for school desks, pencils, notebooks, medical equipment and hospital air conditioning units had been barred.

"The result has been a huge increase in mortality amongst children and the elderly, due to the grave shortage of medicines," he said.

Nuclear fuel removal

The United Nations has shipped about 170 tonnes of equipment to Iraq to remove remaining stocks of nuclear fuel, a senior U.N. inspector said.

"We have received the first shipment of equipment which is needed to remove the fuel," Maurizio Zifferero, deputy director (IAEA), told Reuters.

Mr. Zifferero said the material which will be used to transport the nuclear fuel to Russia had been brought in aboard an

Antonov cargo plane.

Last June, Russia won a contract to remove about 40 kilogrammes of radioactive fuel from Iraq. U.N. inspectors said it was enough to make one or two nuclear bombs.

"All the equipment needed for the removal operations is now in Iraq," Mr. Zifferero said, adding that the operation would take several months and cost tens of millions of dollars.

"The removal will consist of two shipments. There'll be an interval of approximately a month between the two... and we hope to complete the whole operation by early spring next year," he said.

The used fuel is under IAEA's custody at two locations in and around Tuweitha, Iraq's main nuclear centre, 20 kilometres south of Baghdad.

The fuel will be shipped by air to Russia but will have to be trucked from Tuweitha to Habaniya airport about 60 kilometres southwest of Baghdad.

Mr. Zifferero said the remaining irradiated uranium stocks were the last known amounts left in Iraq.

Saudi urges beefed up defence

Saudi Arabia's military commander during the Gulf war said Wednesday the Gulf states could not afford to rely on Western help in any future conflict in the region and should take steps to guarantee their own defence.

"It would be in my view to be the greatest long-term mistake to place our security in the hands of others, however friendly and well-intentioned," Prince Khaled Ben Sultan said. "We must do more for ourselves."

Prince Khaled, one of Saudi King Fahd's nephews, said western governments were cutting back their defence budgets and the United States in particular may be retreating from its international commitments.

"The possible settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the years ahead may make the west even more reluctant to step in when its help is needed in the region," the retired general said in a speech to the Royal United Services Institute in London.

"The next time around, we may have to face the music alone," he said.

Prince Khaled, like Saudi Arabia's current government and other Islamic states, criticised the West for what he said was a failure to intervene on behalf of what he called a "belaguered, outgunned people," a reference to Bosnia's Muslims.

He said this was partly because "Western states see none of their vital interests threatened by the tragedy unfolding in the Balkans." The threat posed by Iraq to Gulf oil supplies to the West was one of the issues at stake in the 1991 Gulf war.

Critics and supporters agree that success or failure

Is Clinton rolling political dice in Somali stand-off?

By Charles Aldinger
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Whether he likes it or not, President Bill Clinton may be rolling the political dice in tattered Somalia.

Experts say he is gambling with U.S. prestige and perhaps his own political future in dispatching a relatively small additional number of U.S. troops and tanks to help stabilise Mogadishu, now ravaged by guerrillas, in the next six months.

Tenacious fighters of fugitive warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed, firing rocket-propelled grenades from rooftops and behind walls, have outmatched American and other U.N. troops in battle after battle over the past two months.

Aided retired army General Ernest Graves of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies: "It can be done, but it will probably mean more killing than we have seen before, including American troops."

of Mr. Clinton's plan to send 1,700 army troops and 104 combat vehicles to Somalia and to station another 3,600 Marines off-shore will be measured by whether lawlessness is still rampant in south Mogadishu early next year.

"I don't know how you can establish complete control of Mogadishu quickly, even if you capture Aideed, unless you have enough troops to put them in high numbers everywhere," said Helmut Sonnenfeld of the Brookings Institution thinktank.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

One administration official bristles at demands in Congress for immediate withdrawal, saying that "all of the humanitarian progress of the past eight months could go down the tubes."

Pentagon officials are privately expressing worry that U.S. military prestige, shredded in the ignominious retreat from Vietnam and rebuilt in the Gulf war, was again being put on the line in Somalia, a country where the United States has virtually no strategic interest.

"Helicopters are nice, but it's so damned hard to fight in a street environment where you don't know who the enemy is and you're trying to keep from killing innocent civilians," said an army special forces colonel, who asked not to be identified.

Mr. Clinton stressed that America could not "cut and run" from Somalia to avoid more troop casualties, because it must finish the humanitarian job of eliminating starvation and leaving a reasonably stable society "on our terms."

France on Thursday joined Italy in criticising the tactics of U.S. forces in Mogadishu, saying the operations "there were already marked by faults and excesses."

The foreign ministry in Paris said 1,100 French troops, serving alongside American forces in the U.N. peacekeeping and relief operation would be withdrawn as planned by January despite a U.N. plea to stay.

"On a continent where France has historically had a major political and social stake, that tells you something about the quagmire in Mogadishu," lamented a senior Pentagon official, who asked not to be identified.

"The debate is really on why are we there," he said.

"The humanitarian mission

was one that we all supported

and should support. That's changed into something that we chase after a warlord, who simply will be replaced by another warlord if we caught him," Mr. Leahy said.

"That's not a policy that the American people support."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait MP seeks data on officials' wealth

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's parliament hopes to pass a law allowing authorities probing corruption to examine personal wealth of senior officials, a lawmaker says. Acting speaker Ahmad Baqer told Reuters Kuwait's opposition-dominated assembly hoped to pass the legislation in the 1993/94 session starting on Oct. 26 to help any officials called upon to investigate future incidents. "The law would be passed in case of future incidents. I do not envisage it being used for current events," he said Thursday by telephone. He did not elaborate on the proposed law. The assembly would also try to pass a law that would allow the courts, subject to the assent of parliament, to try government ministers suspected of corruption. Mr. Baqer said that at the moment ministers could be tried only with the assent of the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah. Kuwaitis are angry over alleged corruption and mismanagement inside a multi-billion dollar worldwide investment empire meant to fund the country when the oil runs out. Estimates of the worth of the fund, valued at about \$100 billion before the start of Iraq's seven-month 1990-91 occupation, range from \$20 billion to \$40 billion. The asset drop was due mostly to Gulf war expenses. But parliamentarians say at least some of the fall was due to years of wrongdoing in a range of state investment bodies for whom a number of government ministers are ultimately responsible.

Protests in Sudan over fuel shortage

CAIRO (R) — Police in Sudan fired tear gas and made charges with motorcycles to break up crowds protesting against a crippling shortage of petrol, a Sudanese newspaper based in Cairo said Thursday. The newspaper, Al Khartoum, said the protest happened on Tuesday in Omdurman, which lies across the Nile from the Sudanese capital Khartoum. It reported that demonstrations erupted on Monday and continued in three areas of the city on Wednesday. The newspaper said there had been similar protests in wad Medani, a city on the Nile 170 kilometres southeast of Khartoum, where demonstrators burned a government vehicle. Police used tear gas to disperse them and some were injured. Salah Mohammad Ibrahim, press counsellor at the Sudanese embassy in Cairo, confirmed there had been protests but said they were small and scattered. "It is true that there are some scattered demonstrations because of the problems of transport due to the shortage of supplies of gas and oil," he told Reuters. "But I don't think it is in a very big scale. It is very small." Asked about details of the newspaper report, Mr. Ibrahim said: "I think it is a sort of exaggeration."

Gunmen kill three in Algiers

ALGIERS (R) — Gunmen shot dead three civilians and seriously wounded two in the suburbs of Algiers, the official news agency APS said Thursday. APS, quoting security services, described the gunmen as terrorists — the official term for fundamentalists fighting to set up an Islamic state. Hundreds of people have been killed in a wave of violence in the last 21 months blamed on Muslim fundamentalist activists. The violence erupted after the army-backed authorities scrapped the country's first multi-party elections after a first round of voting in December 1991. The now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had a massive lead in the poll.

Egypt to host WTO conference in 1995

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AFP) — Egypt has been unanimously chosen to host the 11th World Tourism Organisation (WTO) general assembly in 1995, an organising official with the 10th conference here said Friday. All 121 full member countries, four associate members, and some 240 affiliate members of the WTO voted for Egypt, the official said. The current, five-day conference in the resort island of Bali was scheduled to end Friday. Morocco, Egypt's rival bidder for the 11th conference, has been listed as a potential host for 1997 general assembly along with China, Russia and Turkey, be

cause of disturbances in the outside world.

The protesters are scaring between five and 12 years for disturbing the peace. They staged three warning hunger strikes of 24, 48 and 72 hours each before deciding on a fast of unlimited duration.

Yemen's parliament to elect presidential council

RABAT (R) — Six detainees at a civil prison in the central Moroccan city of Fez began a hunger strike of unlimited duration on Thursday to protest against a ban on visits from their families. In a statement to the media, they said that since Sept. 20 the prison administration had "prohibited that we meet visitors and we are completely isolated from the outside world." The prisoners are serving between five and 12 years for disturbing the peace. They staged three warning hunger strikes of 24, 48 and 72 hours each before deciding on a fast of unlimited duration.

SANA (R) — Yemen's parliament will elect a new five man presidential council Monday to replace the current team headed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, whose term expires this month.

The surprise decision Thursday followed widespread reports that following Yemen's first direct parliamentary elections last April a new president would be directly elected by the country's seven million voters. Mr. Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) is the largest party in the 301-member assembly. Vice-President Ali Salem Al Baidh has remained in his Yemens Socialist Party (YSP) stronghold of Aden for the past two months after disagreements with Mr. Saleh's party over the way the next president should be chosen. Mr. Baidh, whose party has less than half the GPC's 142 parliamentary seats, was pressing for a constitutional amendment to make the presidential council a directly elected body. Senior representatives of the three parties in the ruling parliamentary coalition, the YSP, the GPC and the Islamist party Islah, had talks with Mr. Baidh last month but failed to persuade him to return to Sanaa. The official SABA news agency said preparations were underway for the parliamentary vote on Monday.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

| | |
|------|--------------|
| 0705 | Larnaca (CY) |
| 0730 | Karachi (PK) |

Home News

Princess Basma urges Mafraq women to help in development

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma urged local women's unions in Mafraq to work on contributing towards the government's development.

Addressing a meeting Thursday in Mafraq of women representatives in the governorate, the Princess said, "a sound basis of cooperation and coordination is needed in attaining aspired goals."

She urged women's unions to define projects and give priority to matters designed to improve the standard of living of the local families.

Princess Basma reviewed the country's national strategy on

women, noting that it calls for short and long term plans aimed at improving the status of Jordanian women.

Speakers at the meeting demanded that local women be given preference in employment opportunities within their own governorate and requested that more kindergartens be set up and charitable organisations' work be encouraged and supported by the government.

Among those present were Governor Qasim Majali and Nadia Srour of the University of Jordan who spoke about the role of the women's sector in her region.

Post offices to accept utility bill payments

AMMAN (J.T.) — Before the end of 1993, post offices around the country will begin accepting payment of telephone, water and electricity bills, according to Abdullah Al Jazi, Ministry of Post and Communications secretary general.

The ministry will soon announce the location of post offices in the Greater Amman area where telephone bills could be paid thus saving the public long waiting periods at the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) centres, Dr. Al Jazi told Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

In an article published Friday, Dr. Al Jazi said long queues of subscribers were noticed at the TCC centres in Amman and other regions since the Housing Bank stopped processing the payment of the telephone bills on behalf of the TCC.

The ministry has 900 post offices which will collect utility bill payments from the public, said Dr. Al Jazi.

He added, that the post offices are currently handling student applications to universities, car licence renewals and matters related to the Civil



Abdullah Al Jazi

Status Department.

Also by the end of the year, postage stamps will be available at several pharmacies and major shopping centres, and post office boxes will be installed in each district, Mr. Al Jazi announced.

Furthermore, he said, the ministry is currently in contact with Greater Amman Municipality to arrange for home delivery of mail.

Referring to improvements in the main delivery system, Mr. Al Jazi said that any mail posted before 4 p.m., is sure to reach its destination the following day.

WAJ says it will not increase water charges

AMMAN (Petra) — The Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) Friday said that there will be no further increases in water charges.

Although WAJ plans to increase revenues in order to continue to provide services, it does not intend to increase the price of water, said Kamal Zou'bi, director of WAJ's Subscribers Affairs Department.

He said the cost of new water supply pipes would be increased; the new costs are as follows: JD 88 for a three-quarter-inch pipe, JD 103 for a one-inch pipe, and JD 551 for a four-inch pipe.

The previous charge for all sizes, he noted, was JD 35.

An annual fee of JD 500 will be charged for the use of artesian wells, plus one fils per each cubic metre pumped from such wells, added Mr. Zou'bi.

WAJ has decided to double the price of the authority's tank truck water from 500 fils to JD 1 per cubic metre, Mr. Zou'bi said.

Calling on the public to pay their water bills and thus help WAJ carry out expansion projects and repair damaged pipes, Mr. Zou'bi said that the authority's staff is ready to examine water meters and pipes at the request of subscribers.

Noting that recently WAJ has been receiving complaints about unusually high water bills, Mr. Zou'bi said that subscribers are asked to check their sanitary systems for leaks and to economize in watering gardens.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Photo exhibition displaying pictures from Jordan and Syria by German artist J. Swakowski at the Goethe Institute.
- ★ Art exhibition by Mrs. Lucy Marto at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Photo exhibition entitled "Desert Rituals" by Egyptian artist Mona Ra'ouk at the Belinda Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ali Talib at the Balka's Art Gallery in Al Fuheis.
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Dr. Als Bashir and Sa'di Abbas at the Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Mahmoud Al-Ubedi at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ali Al Mi'mar at the Orfali Art Gallery. Telephone 826932.
- ★ Photographic exhibition on nature and the township of Sakeh by artist Ghassan 'Ayyash at the Student Affairs Department at the University of Jordan.
- ★ Exhibition of etchings by Mohammad Omar Khalil at Darat Al Funun of the Abu Hamid Shoman Foundation in Jabal Iwadiyah. Also showing the permanent exhibition. Telephone 643251/2.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by artist Hussein Daas at the Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ The First International Festival of Fine Arts in Jordan entitled "Colour and Light in the Nabataean Civilization" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts in Jordan.

DRAMAS

- ★ Children's drama entitled "Aladdin's Lamp" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:30 a.m., 11:00 p.m.

BOOK EXHIBITION

- ★ Comprehensive book and educational aids exhibition at the International Exhibition Hall - University Road.

Queen meets with Hilary Clinton Tells Jerusalem Fund its work is crucial

WASHINGTON (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor was the guest of honour at a banquet organised by the Jerusalem Fund for Education and Community Development Thursday to raise funds in support of the fund's programme providing humanitarian assistance to Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

Established in Washington, D.C. in 1977, the Jerusalem Fund seeks to improve and expand the educational, cultural and health institutions of the Palestinian community through financial assistance.

Queen Noor emphasised the importance of Jerusalem to all Arabs and Muslims "because it embodies the very essence of our human and pluralistic values — of a community of people of different religions or ethnic backgrounds living together in mutual respect and harmony, sharing moral principles, and honouring common prophets and patriarchs. Jerusalem should and must become a symbol of peace and brotherhood for all mankind."

The work of the fund is particularly crucial at this time, the Queen said, "when the Palestinian people may be standing on the threshold of a new era of national reconstitution and rebirth. Your example should now inspire Arabs throughout the world to cooperate more closely to assume their shared responsibilities and to protect their identity and common interests."

The Queen added that "the Arab Nation's legacy of humanity and hope must be revitalised and given practical expression throughout the Arab World. Peace, security, stability and development are the fundamental rights of all Arabs."

Also speaking at the banquet was the Most Reverend Samir Kafiti, Episcopal Bishop of Jerusalem, who reviewed the future role and importance of Jerusalem in a peace settlement.

Earlier that evening, Queen Noor addressed a reception held in her honour by the International Council for Women in the Arts (ICWA),

in preparation for an exhibition of work by Arab women artists to be held in April 1994.

The ICWA is a non-profit tax-exempt organisation, which is actively involved in promoting women's art from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It also maintains a data base of artists from these regions, which it shares with museums and universities in the United States.

The planned exhibition, tentatively titled "Arab Women in Transition: From the Traditional to the Contemporary," will feature works of Arab women artists from 15 countries. The exhibited works will include paintings, video works, sculptures, ceramics, jewellery and tapestries."

"As we prepare to put behind us a different century that has seen the Arab World suffer almost perpetual warfare and ideological strife, we must join to promote cultural interaction among our peoples — in particular to promote understanding of the Arab World as a region of ancient and varied human culture, and not merely a stretch of strategic geography or the custodian of geological bounty," the Queen added.

The exhibition is scheduled to open at the National Museum for Women in the Arts and is expected to tour the United States.

Queen Noor said "the exhibition is important and timely because it honours the

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Clinton at the White House,

which took place Thursday.

The meeting, focused on Middle East development, peace and other humanitarian issues of common concern.

Queen Noor Friday met with members of the advisory

board of the Center for the Study of the Global South.

The centre, established in 1991 by Dr. Clovis Maksoud, is devoted to the study of the role of the global south in a changing international world order. It is part of American University's School of International Service.

people in the occupied areas than the situation in Jordan."

He urged the organising of high level personal visits between the two countries so that Jordanian officials could appeal directly to the Japanese leadership about the Jordanian situation and likewise, such a visitor could directly appeal to the Japanese public — the taxpayers and ultimate source of decision making in their system, he said.

Similarly, he continued, a high level Japanese visitor to Jordan could learn directly the situation in this country and explain and appeal to the Jordanian side about Japanese policy.

He said that the role of Jordan-Japan Friendship Association can be crucially important in these efforts.

Jordan-Japan Association suggests bilateral strategies

AMMAN (J.T.) — A great deal has been achieved since the establishment of diplomatic ties between Jordan and Japan in 1974, said Sharif Jamil Ben Nasser, president of the Jordan-Japan Friendship Association (JJFA).

Sharif Jamil was welcoming guests at the reunion dinner of the JJFA Wednesday evening.

In reviewing some of the history of the two countries' bilateral cooperation, Sharif Jamil recalled that in 1937 the first Japanese trade mission visited Jordan to purchase horses.

"Looking at the number of Japanese cars on our roads today, one can conclude that we have exchanged horses for horsepower," said the JJFA president.

Japanese presence in Jordan, he said, has become an integral part of the network of development.

Sharif Jamil praised the distinguished service of the active Japanese volunteers working in different parts of Jordan, in the fields of education, health, art, and agriculture.

He thanked the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the government of Japan and the Japanese people for their willing assistance to Jordan.

Sharif Jamil also thanked Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Yuji Ikeda and his staff for their studies and recommendations which paved the way for this assistance "so much felt in different aspects of our lives, whether in the form of timely financial assistance, soft loans or technical know-how, and training programmes here in Jordan or in Japan."

The JJFA president remarked that he sympathised with the concerns of the Japanese community in Jordan and representatives of world renowned Japanese companies present at the dinner.

He suggested organising meetings with their investors and businessmen in Jordan and with the concerned ministers to enlighten them on economic developments in light of recent events.

Ambassador Ikeda addressed the gathering at the Inter-Continental Hotel saying that the Jordan-Japan relationship has strengthened during the last few years since the Gulf crisis through intensified economic cooperation and mutual attention on the general public level."

"Since I arrived here nine months ago I have always been grateful for the kind words directed to my country by the ministers and many other people I met for the things my country did for Jordan at the time of the Gulf crisis. When I was back in Japan last week, I was pleased to find that there seems to be an increased interest in the political and economic situation of Jordan on the part of many Japanese whom I met and who are in the political, bureaucratic and business quarters more or less exerting influence on our bilateral relations. I also note with appreciation the recent mutual cooperation in the multilateral arena, particularly, the Jordanian support for our efforts to reform the United Nations system," said the ambassador.

But he said, "despite the

Pakistan tug-of-war moves to provinces.

(Continued from page 1)

Newspapers described the situation after Wednesday's inconclusive elections as a crisis and reported that authorities — meaning the army which will supervise Saturday's provincial elections — was hoping to find a way to push Mr. Sharif and Ms. Bhutto into a compromise.

Jahangir Badar, the Punjab

president of Ms. Bhutto's PPP

who lost his bid for a National Assembly seat, said: "Unless we get a majority in Punjab, power at the centre will be meaningless."

Past experience

has shown that the government cannot implement its manifesto if it lacks a hold on Punjab."

The Election Commission

increased mutual understanding in the past few years, the level of knowledge about each other is still quite limited."

Ambassador Ikeda suggested that the Jordanian side exert efforts to know more about Japan, especially about how the system there works.

He added that the Japanese side must understand more about the delicate and important role that Jordan is playing and can play in the future in the region, he said.

Mr. Ikeda said that the recent dramatic development in the Middle East peace process "will probably require, all the more, mutual efforts to maintain and strengthen the bilateral relations since more attention of the world will be directed to the immediate problems of the Palestinian

day's snap polls."

Mir Mirza Bhutto, self-exiled brother of Ms. Bhutto, has received an electoral refugee in his bid to enter Pakistan's parliament, observers said.

Mirza Bhutto was defeated in all three seats he contested from the family's home province of Sind in the elections.

The 39-year-old Damascus-based sole male heir of executed former Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is also a candidate for the Sind assembly in the southern province.

His entry into the election arena, with the backing of mother Begum Nusrat, had triggered a family political row, embarrassing the PPP in the runup to the national polls.

Clinton beefs up forces in Somalia

(Continued from page 1)

Clinton Friday defended Defense Secretary Les Aspin's initial decision not to increase equipment to U.S. troops in Somalia when it was suggested earlier.

"It was his best judgment,"

Mr. Clinton told reporters.

Mr. Clinton's support for his defense secretary stems from Mr. Aspin's recent decision to turn down the request of military commanders in Somalia for increased armoured equipment to protect American troops.

Mr. Aspin's rejection of that request preceded the deaths of at least 15 U.S. Army Rangers in Mogadishu Sunday.

The U.S. president, during a brief exchange with reporters, also defended his decision to set a March 31 deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Somalia (see page 2).

"We have obligations elsewhere," he said, adding that the deadline would put U.S. forces in Somalia for more than one year longer than originally anticipated.

"I just don't believe that we can be in a position to stay any longer than that," said Mr. Clinton, who on Thursday publicly announced a doubling of the size of U.S. forces in Somalia.

At Mogadishu Airport, U.S. Rangers arriving Friday had strict orders not to speak to journalists, but some young soldiers had their word to say.

Sergeant Robert Canarios of the 15th infantry regiment based at Fort Stewart in Georgia declared that the U.N. Operation in Somalia, UNOSOM II, was mainly a humanitarian one and he could not understand the killings of soldiers.

"We are here to help," he said.

A U.S. administration official said the reinforcements would be "very aggressive" in helping restore order, but many aid workers believed there was no clean way out of the Somali quagmire and yet more deaths would result.

Refugee workers from the United Nations and some independent charities were evacuating staff from Mogadishu Sunday, fearing of further violence.

"President Clinton and his administration are digging themselves deeper," said Musa Sheik Mohammud, an Aideed follower and editor of the New Era newspaper.

"If they come and try to capture Aideed or kill him, there will be no victory, only a mess, a bath of blood."

Fatah leaders meet in Tunis

(Continued from page 1)

U.N. spokesman said relief work in the city was "considerably curtailed."

Many Somalis from warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed's Habre Gedir clan, the bedrock of his close support in a country of dozens of clans, were worried but defiant at the prospect of the arrival of more U.S. troops.

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"If they come and try to capture Aideed or kill him, there will be no victory, only a mess, a bath of blood."

The Palestinian territory which is not yet handed over to the compromised, Iranian Television quoted him as saying.

Iran has joined Palestinian groups in condemning Mr. Arafat as a traitor for the peace deal.

But President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, leader of the Islamic Jihad in Palestine, said Gaza and Jericho constituted only two per cent of the Israeli occupied lands.

The Islamic Jihad movement will continue its general struggle in the 98 per cent of

territory against fighting one another.

Mr. Shaqqaq, who met Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday, said

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Building of framework

THERE IS increasing talk by Israel about a tripartite accord linking the Jewish state to Jordan and Palestine. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres echoed this sentiment at the opening of the Socialist International in Lisbon a few days ago when he said: "We need this triangle... I can see an agreement between Jordanians and ourselves." Mr. Peres also told his audience that the final aim of the ongoing peace process was "independence for all and to live as real neighbours." The Israeli foreign minister had more than political settlements on his mind when he added that "if you allow independence but you do not allow economic development, it will be a failure."

This new Israeli drive strikes us as premature at best at this stage of the negotiating process. The PLO-Israeli deal still has a long way to go before it can take definite shape and form. Jordan cannot be expected to jump on the bandwagon of normalisation, to the point of signing economic accords, without first testing the Israeli intentions on the ground. Furthermore, the Kingdom cannot at this juncture be more forthcoming and accommodating than it has been on its role in the implementation of the interim part of the PLO-Israeli accord. The self-rule envisioned for the Palestinians should take deeper roots before we can boast of reaching real peace with Israel.

It is common knowledge by now that even this interim self-rule for the Palestinians on the basis of Gaza-Jericho first formula cannot see the light of day without the full cooperation of Jordan. Hence, the close and inevitable link between the fate of the Palestinians and that of their brethren in the Kingdom. But only at the conclusion of the five years of transition period that should lead to greater independence for the Palestinians can Jordan find it feasible and viable to complete the process for comprehensive peace arrangements. If Palestine is to enjoy a commonality of economic interests with both Israel and Jordan, then obviously something needs to be worked out to institutionalise, regulate and control this broader scheme for the Middle East.

Needless to say, all this talk about grand designs for the future in the area is contingent on registering real progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks. True and lasting peace cannot be achieved without participation and full cooperation of Damascus and Beirut. That is why there is a pressing need to deliver on the much awaited breakthrough on the Syrian front as well. Pragmatism and enlightened planning would not exclude the full partnership of Damascus as well in the so-called tripartite order with a view to including both Syria and Lebanon in any future regional economic cooperation. Such a vision for the future cannot succeed if Israel remains selective in its perspective and piecemeal in its approach. The Fertile Crescent concept, incorporating the historical Fertile Crescent states of the area, appears to hold more promise than a mere tripartite framework that may be interpreted as an exclusive club posing a threat on other countries of the Arab World. But this is only one option to contemplate and entertain for the future. There are other frameworks in which peace with justice can survive and prosper to serve the real interests of all the peoples in the region. These frameworks have to be designed, arrived at and agreed upon from within, however. They cannot be imposed from the outside and they certainly cannot be shaped by Israel unilaterally waving its magic wand.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST IN Al Ra'i daily said that the PLO had committed a blunder by accepting the Gaza-Jericho option at a time when it was in its power to continue negotiating with the Israelis and the Americans and achieve immediate self-rule for the whole of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Fahed Fanek said that the American proposal that was earlier rejected by the PLO had provided for better gains for the Palestinians, had the Palestinians accepted the American document, there would not have been any need for the Oslo secret talks and the PLO-Israel deal that limited self-rule at this stage to Gaza and Jericho alone, added the writer. At the same time, he said, the Palestine National Council did not give the PLO leadership the green light to accept the separate deal with the Israelis in its present form. The only interpretation for the strange behaviour of the PLO leadership at this stage is that the PLO leadership had resorted to the separate deal with Israel in order to save its own skin and not to save Palestine, charged the writer. At the same time, Israel won by securing from this leadership a recognition by the Palestinians of its legitimate existence in the land of Palestine, he added.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour expressed the view that Israel is now trying to achieve, through economic means, hegemony over the Arab region which it had failed to fulfil by military force. Mohammad Kawash said that Israel is planning to impose its hegemony over the Arab and Islamic nations of the region through a peace formula that would entail linking the cities of the region through a network of roads and other forms of communication.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

No more docile, Jordan asserts national interests

THE NET outcome of Jordanian diplomacy spearheaded personally by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in Washington and New York in the past two weeks has totally demolished speculation that the Jordanian role in the Middle East was being marginalised.

If anything, the meeting the Crown Prince had with President Bill Clinton and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the American president's underlining of the Kingdom's pivotal slot in the Middle East and the enthusiastic Arab League endorsement of the Jordanian address to the United Nations General Assembly as an embodiment of the Arab quest for peace as well as the discussions Prince Hassan held with Arab-American leaders have indicated that the Kingdom has restaked an undisputable position in the regional and international scene.

Western journalists may even have to scan through their vocabulary to replace their catch-phrase "the small tin-pot Kingdom" to describe Jordan. Indeed we are small, but in the emerging political scenario, Jordan's weight has gone beyond the expectations of many.

No longer does Jordan have to look over its shoulder and wait for others at the expense of its own national interests in the quest for a secure and stable Middle East. Future generations cannot point a finger at Jordan as having sidestepped their interests since the Jordanian approach remains very much within its declared objective of a peace that they could cherish and safeguard.

Indeed, it was a dramatic switch in Jordan's foreign policy while remaining very much within the overall objective of serving the cause of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East as well as Arab national interests.

For decades, Jordan followed a docile foreign policy based on an approach warranted by the geopolitical situation of the Kingdom, the presence of giant neighbours on all sides and limited natural resources. Such a position was imposed on Jordan by the unique nature of the Kingdom's linkage with the Palestinian problem.

While the Palestinian problem was a foreign policy issue for all other Arab countries, Jordan had to live with the reality that its foreign policy considerations had to be essentially drawn up against the backdrop of the international considerations stemming from demography — the presence of a large number of Palestinians on its territory — let alone the fact that the Kingdom suffered whenever the Palestinian cause suffered.

Not that the demographic factor has changed now, but the fast pace the Middle East peace-making assumed after the groundbreaking Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord cleared the way for Jordan to break free from the constraints imposed on it by its linkage with the political context of the Palestinian problem.

As the events of the last two weeks evidence, a Jordan free from the political chains is in a much better position to stake its

positions and demand reciprocation from the international community. And, sure enough, that is what Jordan has received.

The political gains from the switch towards asserting Jordan's own national interests as an inevitable factor that the international community has to take into consideration in Middle East peace-making by far outweigh the economic benefits that we stand to gain.

For one thing, the courageous step that Prince Hassan undertook under the guidance of His Majesty King Hussein to meet with Mr. Peres has not only reemphasised the role of Jordan as an independent player in the region but also established the fact that the Kingdom can no longer be the target of Likudniks who propagate the "Jordan is Palestine" theory. Jordan is an independent and sovereign kingdom unwittingly drawn into the colonial political game and paid dearly for it. Now, it will not allow itself to be taken for granted (or for a ride as some did try to).

Second, the obvious American acceptance of the fact that there cannot be any realistic move in the peace process without Jordan and Washington's swift action to publicly recognise and elevate Jordan to the centre-stage of Middle Eastern politics as an independent player with its own lines has given a new dimension to the Kingdom's relations with the U.S. (not that the Americans were not aware of the Jordanian slot, but it used to be taken for granted for a long time).

By extension, the new American-Jordanian scenario and the newfound Amman-Washington understanding should and would lead to better relations between Jordan and its immediate Arab neighbours. It may not happen overnight, but it is inevitable that the traditional friends of Jordan are publicly in recognition of the fact that they did not treat Jordan and Jordanian fairly over the past three years (Kuwait is a different story and a different kettle of fish of course).

It was no natural turn of events that led to the course Jordanian diplomacy took in the wake of the Israel-PLO accord. It was the result of a careful evaluation of the given in the political scene and the decision that the time was ripe for Jordan to eliminate its docile image and assert its principled positions vis-a-vis the new world order and the quest for the much-sought-after solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Again, our decision-makers have reaffirmed one simple truth: Jordan can raise itself to the challenges of the day, particularly at a crucial make-or-break phase and when its survival is, rightly or wrongly, put into question by people who have now business to do so in the first place.

Now that Jordan has accomplished what it had been trying to accomplish for decades, the path from here is by no means rosy. There will be repercussions from quarters which were taken by surprise by the turn of events. But then, no doubt, it is a calculated risk and the international community, with the U.S. at its forefront, shoulders an unshirkable responsibility towards ensuring that Jordan arrives where it has set forth for.

China image puts it on collision course with West

By David Schlesinger
Reuter

tructio of nuclear weapons, is of extremely limited significance," it said.

Chinese officials are fond of saying that the United States has exploded 25 nuclear devices for every one that China has.

Peking meets U.S. attacks on Chinese arms sales by saying that Washington is one of the world's biggest arms merchants.

"The official doesn't let the common man light a lamp but be himself burns down houses," runs a traditional proverb that often appears in official commentaries defending China's record against western attacks.

Similarly, when the West blasts Peking's human rights record, attacking its treatment of political opponents, China responds by saying that at this stage in its development the right to survival is the human right that matters most to Chinese people.

And in trade disputes, from market opening to copyright protection, China often asks for special dispensation because it is still developing its economy.

"These are all part of the same picture," said another western diplomat. "Especially where there is so much pressure all at once over so many issues, it would be impossible for a Chinese leader to back down when national pride is at stake."

When western attacks on its human rights record helped scuttle China's bid to host the 2000 Olympics — something the Communist Party had staked its pride on — it only hardened the resolve of government leaders to develop the country in their own way, diplomats believe.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Russians killed in the name of democracy with backing by the West

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

The bloody events in Moscow dominated the topics in the local press in the past week, but the Middle East developments, the situation in Somalia and domestic issues were also given due coverage.

Writing under the title "Black Monday in Moscow", Al Ra'i daily said in an editorial that it was a sad conclusion for the democracy in Russia and a triumph for the U.S.-led western nations which praised the act of terrorism against the representatives of the people.

Washington and its allies realise that Mr. Yeltsin is blinded by his lust for power and that he is striving to become emperor or tsar through the so-called reforms he has been advocating, said the writer. Indeed, Washington wants Mr. Yeltsin to rule so that he can protect America's own interests and that Russia remain in the pay of the western nations.

Mr. Yeltsin has now completed the mission of his predecessor, Mikhail Gorbachev, by subjugating the Russian people to the whims and desires of the western nations, said Mohammad Daoudieh in Al Dustour.

What happened in Moscow is a continuation of the imposition of the western hegemony through agents working against the interests of the Russian people, said the writer.

He said that the Russian events should give the Arabs a good lesson and open the eyes of the Arab masses and their leaders to the fact that only through democracy can a country find stability and democracy.

Once again the western nations which supported the massacre in Russia prove to the world that they are anti-freedom and anti-democracy, said Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily. The bloody events in Moscow have once again showed the world that Washington and its allies continue to support dictatorship against the interests of the masses and are never inclined to support any genuine move towards democracy in other nations around the world, he added.

By massacring the representatives of the people, the writer added, Mr. Yeltsin has opted for a long and bloody civil war which can only be detrimental to his country.

Mr. Yeltsin has succeeded in stifling the voice of the

people for some time, but he can never escape their wrath although he is now enjoying the support of the western nations for his dictatorial powers, added the writer.

Salah Al Qallah, a columnist in Al Dustour, said it is surprising to see and hear the western nations supporting the Russian president at a time when these countries never stop bragging about their false support for democracy.

Washington and its allies realise that Mr. Yeltsin is blinded by his lust for power and that he is striving to become emperor or tsar through the so-called reforms he has been advocating, said the writer. Indeed, Washington wants Mr. Yeltsin to rule so that he can protect America's own interests and that Russia remain in the pay of the western nations.

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He said that the Russian events should give the Arabs a good lesson and open the eyes of the Arab masses and their leaders to the fact that only through democracy can a country find stability and democracy.

Once again the western nations which supported the massacre in Russia prove to the world that they are anti-freedom and anti-democracy, said Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily. The bloody events in Moscow have once again showed the world that Washington and its allies continue to support dictatorship against the interests of the masses and are never inclined to support any genuine move towards democracy in other nations around the world, he added.

The U.S. administration noted the paper, has expressed support for a move to reduce the burdens on Jordan and it is just, right and timely for the world community to take this seriously and help the Kingdom move ahead towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

A writer in Al Ra'i said that all parties in the Middle East are bound to gain from peace, provided it is just and

needed for the time being to stifle the voice of the Russian people, but this state of affairs is not bound to last for long, said Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i.

By murdering democracy, Mr. Yeltsin has his hands stained with blood and it will be most difficult for the president to retain his seat and impossible for the western media to support a dictator from now on, said the writer. One day, he said, the opposition forces would rally behind a strong leader and topple the dictator.

Fahed Al Fanek, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, tackled the question of ending the Arab boycott against Israel, stressing that the Arabs would be committing a blunder if they take such a step.

The writer said that such a serious move can only be taken after a permanent peace has been established, serving justice to all the parties in the region. We cannot commit economic suicide, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said in Washington, by allowing the Israelis to reap the fruit of their agreements with the Arabs before agreeing to a lasting and honourable peace for all, said the writer. If America is in a hurry to force Jordan to be committed to peace, it has only to convince Israel to do its own share in ensuring that peace will be durable and just, demanded the writer.

Sawt Al Shaab daily demanded that Jordan be helped to overcome its economic difficulties and be compensated for its hosting the refugees and for its contribution to peace.

We want a kind of peace that would deal with issues of development, unemployment, water, security and territory, a comprehensive and just peace that would serve justice to all, said the writer.

The U.S. administration, noted the paper, has expressed support for a move to reduce the burdens on Jordan and it is just, right and timely for the world community to take this seriously and help the Kingdom move ahead towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

A writer in Al Ra'i said that all parties in the Middle East are bound to gain from peace, provided it is just and



lasting Yousef Bouran said that peace with Israel will save the Arabs a fortune, that otherwise would have been spent on armament, but most importantly, peace would not justify the existence of martial or semi-martial and dictatorial rule in many Arab countries.

All justifications for autocratic rule now prevailing in the Arab World would vanish and more development projects would mushroom everywhere once genuine peace has been established, added the writer.

It is naive to describe the peace offers available to the Arabs as genuine peace, said Tareq Masarweh. Peace coming from Israel and the United States is one that can only ensure the interests of these enemies and not those of the Arab Nation and would only guarantee Israeli hegemony over the destiny of the Arab Nation, said the writer.

Israel and the United States are motivated by the desire to impose their economic hegemony on the Arab World and so they are offering the Arabs a kind of peace that will not take into consideration the interests of the Palestinians and the Arab countries at large.

Scores of U.N. resolutions passed since 1947 have granted the Palestinian refugees the right of return, said Mohammad Qudah, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. The coming talks between

the Palestinian and the Israelis should not ignore this fact nor should anything distract the Palestinian negotiators from insisting that these resolutions be implemented, demanded the writer.

It should be noted here, said the writer, that while Israel is taking adamantine stands with regard to repatriating the refugees, it is going on with its programme of settling new Jewish immigrants on occupied Arab lands.

After Vietnam and Lebanon, the United States is bogged down in Somalia where its forces have been sustaining heavy losses for their occupation of the African country, said Al Dustour daily.

The paper said that the current reappraisal of the U.S. military presence in Somalia by the U.S. Congress and Senate could be the start of the final chapter of America's presence in the African nation where the declared purpose of its presence has been to provide aid to the starving population.

It seems, after all, that the U.S. marines who invaded Somalia did not go there to give aid to the starving people but rather to achieve a military and political objective, in the Horn of Africa, said Mohammad Kawash in Al Dustour.

The writer said that American forces are in the Horn of Africa to threaten Sudan,

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Qousous, a columnist called on the Amman mayor to visit the eastern districts of Amman and see by himself the waste water and dirt floating in the streets and the alleys and not to be content with visiting the fashionable districts in western Amman.

The writer said that the lives of the children of the eastern districts of Amman are endangered by the continued and persisting presence of dirt and waste water and it is high time for the municipality to move fast and deal with the situation.

Forgotten Greek island dreams of better times under socialists

By Dina Kyriakidou
Reuter

CASTELLORIZO, Greece — "Europe starts here," says the sign at the picturesque port, welcoming the few visitors who venture to the most remote of the Greek islands.

Centuries-old waterfront houses with bright paintwork and ornate ironwork testify to past riches. They stand like a stage set, hiding the ruins of the German bombing that almost flattened the island in 1943.

In 1910 Castellorizo had a population of 14,000 and about 180 sailing ships. Now about 200 people live here permanently and a few wooden fishing boats rock next to foreign luxury yachts that moor here for the night.

Six hours by boat from the tourist island of Rhodes but only 20 minutes from the Turkish town of Kashi, the island known in ancient Greek as "Megisti" — the biggest — smuggles most of its fruit, vegetables and meat from Turkey.

General elections scheduled for Oct. 10 have caused little excitement. Few islanders believe a change of government in Athens can provide long-term solutions to their troubles.

"Unless someone actually picks it up and moves it closer to the mainland, the island will always have problems," said Maria Mayafai who works at the family taverna.

But some of its most pressing ones, such as lack of water and of frequent and cheap transport, can be helped by a willing government, she said.

The days of the 1981-1989 socialist government are remembered fondly on Castellorizo, which traditionally votes for the Socialist Party (PASOK).

"PASOK built the airport, the medical centre, it started building houses for the homeless and upgraded the port," Ms. Mayafai said. "It even gave a free deep freezer and sewing machine to every family."

"PASOK built the airport, the medical centre, it started building houses for the homeless and upgraded the port. It even gave a free deep freezer and sewing machine to every family."

Asked to remember any of the good things that the conservative government has done in the past three years, Ms. Mayafai says: "It brought us a music concert two years ago."

The new democracy government began installing a digital telephone network this year and had approved funds to finish the construction of much-needed housing.

Just like Greeks elsewhere

who have suffered more than three years of economic austerity, people on Castellorizo say the government has done too little too late.

Promises of creating a passport control office have not yet materialised. Tourists from Turkey cannot spend the night on the island and the daily trip for food and basics often means outrunning the Greek navy patrol boat to avoid arrest.

The patrol boat makes nightly trips to stop Kurds and Iraqis from crossing illegally to seek asylum in Europe. It sometimes intercepts Greek fishing boats full of tomatoes and grapes bought in Kash.

Few on the island are prepared to give the conservatives a second chance. Most remember when the boat from Rhodes was free, when the ship from Piraeus would come twice a week and the island looked clean and well-kept.

"It has never looked so dirty and run-down in all the years I visited," said an Australian whose parents left the island after the war and who has returned to fix up the family house.

A recent opinion poll showed the socialists leading with 44.5 per cent support and the conservatives down to 32.4 per cent from 47 per cent they won in the 1990 election.

Praised by international organisations for cutting inflation, privatising state firms and taking steps to limit chronic deficits, the government's tight economic policies have had a heavy political cost.

Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis has even hired a team of U.S. campaign advisers

to improve his popularity and help him persuade voters a bright economic future awaits Greece.

The secretary of the local PASOK branch, which has four members, said a socialist victory would shake up the conservative mayor and revive his interest in improving Castellorizo.

"This island never votes conservative. The mayor told us he was running as an independent but after the election we found out from state television that he had been supported by new democracy," said Manolis Matsos, a 60-year-old fisherman.

He said that, with PASOK in power, things would change for the better but his 90-year-old mother Maria Matsou disagreed.

"Nobody has ever cared much about Castellorizo," she said.



Morrison an 'avenging angel' against U.S. racism

By Arthur Spiegelman
Reuter

NEW YORK — She has been described as an "avenging angel" remembering and recording the tragic legacy of slavery and segregation and in her books hurihile things happen — a mother kills her two-year-old daughter and a wife slashes the face of her husband's dead mistress.

As of Thursday, "avenging angel" Toni Morrison, a 62-year-old African-American woman writer widely popular among critics and readers, has another title — winner of the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature.

The Nobel committee hailed Mrs. Morrison for giving life to "an essential aspect of American reality" — its racism — and attempting to liberate the American language from "the fetters of race."

Ms. Morrison, awoken early

by a colleague at Princeton University where she teaches,

declared herself delighted because, "the most wonderful thing for me personally is to know that the prize has at last been awarded to an African-American."

And she thanked God that her mother was alive to share in the thrill of the award.

In an interview with Reuters, Mrs. Morrison says she can't quite agree with the comparison to an "avenging angel."

"It makes me sound larger than what I am. I don't have a sword and I don't want to redress wrongs. I want to alter the language and rid it of a



Toni Morrison

certain portion of its racism) and fill the void with the voice of black women. It is a risky business."

Born February 18, 1931, the second of four children to George and Ramah Wofford in Lorain, Ohio, Ms. Morrison was both a child of the depression and of segregation, growing up "with more than a child's contempt for white people."

Her mother, a strong-willed woman who Mr. Morrison said would write the president "if there were maggots in our flour," believed that relations between blacks and whites would eventually improve. But her father distrusted "every word and every gesture of ev-

ery white man on earth."

Ms. Morrison attended multi-racial schools as a child in Ohio and the all-black Howard University in Washington, D.C.

At Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, she won an advanced degree in English literature, specialising in the novels of William Faulkner, a white American from the south of great poetic power, who many critics have compared her work to. Faulkner won the Nobel Prize in 1949.

She is the author of six novels, all of which have racism and liberation from racism as their themes.

"Racism and oppression do extraordinary things. And you

have to accommodate yourself to certain kinds of excesses and distortions," she told USA Today newspaper last year after the publication of her latest novel, "Jazz," in which a woman slashes the face of her dead husband's mistress as her body lies in a casket at a funeral home.

The novel, written much the way a jazz melody is developed with its theme disappearing and returning in different voices, is a tale of the great migration of black people in the 1920s from the segregated south to the impoverished north.

In her most popular novel, "Beloved," which won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize, a slave kills her two-year-old child so that she will not grow up a slave. The novel is filled with the horrors of slavery — kidnappings, rapes and beatings, realities too powerful for the slaves themselves to tell.

USA Today critic Deirdre Donahue called Ms. Morrison "An avenging angel" for books like "Beloved."

Ms. Morrison says she is trying to break the code of race as it appears in American literature, where white writers impose their own clinches on blacks, giving them a sinister quality of life that beggars the reality that it is class — not race — that is the problem.

"The word 'blacks' is used to mean poverty. This plays into America's willingness to dismiss anything that is considered a 'black' problem, like welfare and public schools," she said in the USA Today interview.

Serbia's welcome for refugee kinsfolk is wearing thin

By Helen Smith
Reuter

BELGRADE — A Serbian maxim that "any guest is enough after three days" was ignored without hesitation as refugees from the wars in Croatia and Bosnia began arriving in Serbia in 1991.

Thousands of people opened their homes to relatives and strangers.

But as the wars in former Yugoslavia drag into a third year, animosity is growing toward the 500,000 refugees.

Many people in Serbia, reduced to poverty by the country's economic collapse, deeply resent the handouts refugees receive from aid agencies and the government.

They complain that refugees cause overcrowding on trains and buses and say they aggravate the food shortages in the

shops. The refugees receive regular food parcels, clothing and washing materials from aid agencies. They travel free on public transport and their medicines and medical care are paid for by the government.

A Bosnian or Croatian accent now often provokes shouts of "why don't you go home?"

Refugees say some shopkeepers refuse to serve them.

"The Serbs here are worse than the Muslims in Bosnia," said a Serb refugee from Sarajevo. "They say you are given everything when we have lost everything." About 95 per cent of the refugees live with Serbian families, a proportion surpassing that in any other country that has taken in refugees.

One man opened his tiny home on the banks of the

River Drina to 24 refugees on a single night when 7,000 people fled fighting in Bosnia, some swimming, some crowding into tiny boats.

This spectacular show of hospitality was made partly because many ethnic Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia have relatives in Serbia.

Host families have become frustrated, at living in over-crowded conditions and resentful about the help the refugees get while they themselves face hunger and sickness.

Many hosts have asked their guests to leave. The Red Cross and Serbia's Commission for Refugees, which are jointly responsible for housing refugees, say people rarely offer to take in people displaced by the war.

"Many people thought the war would not last for long and they took on obligations they

could not handle," said Julija Kotal, spokeswoman for the Belgrade Red Cross.

Bosko Vojvodic, Serbia's deputy commissioner for refugees, estimates he will have to find an extra 130,000 places in refugee camps next year for people turned out by host families.

"A lot of people are cancelling their hospitality," he said.

Refugees receive food such as pasta and sugar rarely seen on the bare shelves of Serbian shops, increasing the resentment of local people struggling to survive in an economy ruled by the black market.

"Even when food is available, few can afford to buy it. The average monthly salary of around 16 will purchase about a kilo of meat.

Up to half of Serbia's working population is out of work and many of those who still have jobs are not regularly paid.

"We are constantly trying to

persuade people that refugees are not all war profiteers, money changers or avoiding the army," Ms. Kotal says with a shrug that suggests most people are proving hard to convince.

Ms. Kotal says she gets regular visits from hosts asking whether their refugee guests have been getting their aid packages — the refugees are advised to share their bounties with their hosts.

Resentment is fuelled by gangs of young Bosnian men who make their living on the streets of Serbia's towns and cities, selling black market cigarettes or changing dinars for marks.

To many people in Serbia these youths are deserters who should be fighting with the Serb side in Bosnia or Croatia.

The Red Cross, already overburdened with feeding and housing the steady flow of refugees into Serbia, now has the additional task of cleaning up the image of the refugees.

"We are constantly trying to



The Arab oil embargo — a nightmare etched on the West's mind

By Nicholas Moore
Reuter

LONDON — Twenty years after the 1973 Arab oil embargo the nightmare was unrelenting as the pumps might run dry remains etched on the western mind.

It has never happened. But only the bravest oil company executive rules out a new oil "shock" before the century ends.

Only recently, worry about Russian oil prices as unrest flared in Moscow sent petroleum futures prices skipping higher.

And Russian exports of some two million barrels daily are a mere trickle compared with more than 15 million — a fifth of global supply — that is produced in the volatile Middle East.

Saudi Arabia's King Faisal reluctantly sanctioned the Arab embargo of 20 years ago, to punish the West for its support of Israel in the Middle East war that began on Oct. 6, 1973.

Prices quadrupled.

In fact, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), was never the greedy cartel portrayed by western media.

The Saudis soon turned up their taps again to tame the ambitions of OPEC pricing "hawks" led by the late shah of Iran.

And the present Saudi oil minister, Hisham Nazer, insists that western concern about security of supply is an unfortunate hangover "living with us from the distant past."

Notably, Arabs and Israelis are now making peace.

On the other hand, two further oil "shocks" since 1973 have scoured the global eco-

nomy. Neither had to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Also, in neither case was supply ever actually throttled.

Fear that it might be was again the spur.

In 1979-80, panic-buying led by the Japanese took prices to all-time highs above \$40 per barrel on fear that the Islamic revolution that overthrew the Shah might reach Saudi Arabia.

In 1990, prices again reached \$40 (they are around \$17 now) after Iraq invaded fellow OPEC founder-member Kuwait. The fear then was that Iraqi missiles might strike the Saudi oilfields.

On one view, the 1990 episode suggested that the world has learned how to manage crises in the oil markets. Prices took only days rather than years to retreat from the fear-inspired highs.

The earlier "shock" had led to the West setting up the Paris-based international energy agency which monitors required minimum stock levels.

Stocks now total nearly 100 days of forward supply in the industrial nations.

Also, OPEC itself insists that its concern is stable supply at fair prices, not holding the world to ransom.

But it seems an irony that the West's residual fear of a cut-off may, in fact, beighten the risk that one may happen.

New western taxes, it argues, designed to curb demand for imported oil, may discourage producers from investing the huge sums that are needed to increase their output capacity.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S POSITION The Jordanian-American Commission for Educational Exchange

The newly established Jordanian-American Commission for Educational Exchange (The Fulbright Commission), Amman, Jordan, invites applications from Jordanian and American citizens for the position of executive director.

The Commission is a non-profit, bi-national entity responsible for administering a complex programme of international academic exchange between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United States of America.

The successful candidate must be fluent in English and familiar with Arabic, have strong oral and written communication skills, be thoroughly conversant with the educational systems of the two countries, and hold an earned PhD. He or she must have at least five years' experience in a senior academic/financial managerial position (preferable in a cross-cultural, Arab-American environment) and at least two years' experience living in the Arab World (for a Jordanian applicant, two years' experience living in the United States). Working knowledge of the policies and procedures of the Fulbright Programme and experience in multi/bilateral organisations are desirable.

Duties will include, but not be limited to, the management of all aspects of the Commission's operation — administrative, financial, personnel and public relations. Candidates must be effective when interacting with Jordanian and American government officials and academics and be able to guide the implementation of an international exchange programme that meets the changing needs of both countries, ensuring that the Commission fulfills the legislative intent and purposes of the bilateral agreement.

The application should include a cover letter and a technical writing sample.

A one-year renewable contract; salary negotiable. Apply by November 1, 1993 to:

(in Jordan)
Jonathan K. Rice
American Embassy (USIS)
P.O. Box 354
Amman, 1118 Jordan

(in the United States)
Jonathan K. Rice
Unit 7025
APO AE 09892-0205

Arab Gulf countries remain heavily reliant on food imports

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Wealthy Gulf Arab states are pumping billions of petrodollars into the agricultural sector to lessen reliance on imported food but their policies and poor farm potential are keeping them far from that goal, their industrial watchdog has said.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states imported more than \$8 billion worth of foodstuff in 1992, nearly one third of the total Arab food import bill, the Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consultancy (GOIC) said in a study on GCC food industries.

It said the six members — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — were giving priority to expanding their farming sector to realise what it called food security.

"But there is no clear government policy directed towards the food sector in member states," it said. "There are only general guidelines for the

industrial policy as a whole allowing that sector to get certain incentives."

"The performance of the food sector in the GCC remains modest although giant companies have emerged in this field with some of them having a single capital of more than \$800 million," the study pointed out.

GOIC gave no figures for GCC food imports in previous years but a recent Arab League report estimated they stood at \$7.5 billion in 1980, \$6.5 billion in 1985 and \$7 billion in 1990.

The 1992 figure accounted for nearly one third of the total Arab food imports of around \$23.4 billion. While food imports by Arab nations exceeded five per cent of the total world farm imports, their farm exports have remained below one per cent of the world's.

Officials have blamed political instability and lack of investment in the agricultural

sector in such fertile Arab League countries as Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Lebanon. Instability has also discouraged Gulf states, mostly desert land, from investing in farming in those countries.

As a result, the bulk of the arable land in the Arab region has remained unexploited, with only 42 million of the 133 million hectares are cultivated.

"There are several obstacles for food industries in the GCC," GOIC said. "They include water shortage and the untoward natural conditions which make the arable land limited. Expanding the cultivated areas require huge investment and long time of planning of between 20 and 30 years."

Gulf states believe reducing reliance on imported food is a strategic objective as they have often warned of the political and security implications of depending on others in such vital sectors as farming and water.

Some of them have reported headway in certain products like vegetable and fruit while Saudi Arabia has become a pure exporter of wheat after it pumped large investments into such a sector.

But they remain largely reliant on other sectors. In 1991, GCC's imports of cereal stood at 2.6 million tonnes while imports of rice stood at 770,000 tonnes, meat at 400,000 tonnes, dairy at 250,000 tonnes and sugar 470,000 tonnes. The six members also import around seven million sheep every year.

Although Sudan has the potential to feed the Arab World's 240 million people, government policies and lack of investments in the 22 Arab nations have made them the biggest single food importer in the world.

In 1991, they imported 63 per cent of the world's sheep imports, 19 per cent of the world's wheat, 15 per cent of the rice and barley, 16 per cent of coffee, 13 per cent of eggs and 11 per cent of sugar.

Libya said moving \$500m out of West

CAIRO (R) — Libya, fearing tighter U.N. sanctions will tie up foreign holdings, has asked Moroccan bankers to move money out of Western banks, an Arab newspaper said Friday. The London-based Al Hayat, in a report from the Moroccan capital Rabat, quoted "informed economic sources" as saying Moroccan banks in Europe were helping to move up to \$500 million of Libyan money out of Europe into safety elsewhere.

"A dollar of debt reduction is less costly for the United States in budgetary terms than a dollar of new grant assistance," said Jeffrey Shafer, assistant secretary of the treasury for international affairs.

He said the administration has made it a priority to seek authority for Congress to join other creditor governments in reducing by half the highest-interest debt owed by the poorest countries. The authority has been given for the current year.

Al Hayat said Tripoli's Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company (LAFIGCO) was interested in buying Moroccan hotels being privatised, continuing a policy the group has followed for some time of diversifying out of Western investments.

Egyptian bankers have reported similar Libyan interest in bidding for Egyptian luxury hotels about to be put up for privatisation.

According to the International Monetary Fund, LAFIGCO held assets worth \$3.9 billion in 1988, over 80 per cent of which was in the Arab World and Africa.

Earlier, administrator J. Brian Atwood of the U.S.

U.S. officials say debt forgiveness cheaper than new aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration will work with other creditors to find ways to forgive debts of the poorest countries, a U.S. official told Congress Thursday.

"They will be largely countries that would be 'graduating' in any case," Mr. Atwood said.

He added that the list is still being discussed within the U.S. Treasury.

Countries are said to graduate when their people reach a level of income that no longer justifies official help.

Mr. Atwood said his agency could not continue in all 108 countries because of its "resource problems" — a reference to reluctance in Congress to vote more money.

Harry Johnston, who chairs the subcommittee on Africa in the Foreign Affairs Committee, suggested debt relief for countries with "real progress on the transition to democracy and a willingness to shift budget priorities from the military to the social sector."

Witnesses dwelt on the

needs of poorer countries of southern Africa in a discussion before the subcommittee on international development in the banking committee of the House of Representatives.

Earlier, administrator J.

Brian Atwood of the U.S.

Chinese banks squeeze big firms

PEKING (R) — China's banks, forced to call in loans to meet government-set austerity targets, are squeezing large state-owned enterprises, the official People's Daily reported Friday.

Under a 16-point plan to cool the country's overheated economy, banks were set strict targets to recall illegal loans — but could not recover money lent for property projects that had been turned into concrete and steel.

Trying to meet their targets the banks instead called in regular loans to big firms, making it difficult for them to pay wages and buy materials, the Communist Party newspaper said.

The measures had also led to a rise in stocks of goods and growth of debts owed among state firms.

China unveiled its new controls in July after industrial output grew by 25.1 per cent in the first half of the year and fixed asset investment soared by 70.7 per cent.

The People's Daily said the plan had succeeded in boosting bank savings by individuals thanks to higher interest rates.

It said China should deepen financial reforms. Banks should not be required to make a profit and at the same time fund inefficient state firms.

China has announced plans to set up two policy banks which will take over much of these low-profit loans, leaving other banks to concentrate on behaving more like commercial banks.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY OCTOBER 9, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Now you have one of those days when you have a special opportunity to weigh and balance your long-range plans with the desires of your associates. Confer in real harmony. Allow no interruptions.

MOSCOW (R) — One in five of Russia's industrial employees now works for a newly privatised firm thanks to the biggest sell-off of state property the world has ever seen, an adviser to the Russian government has said.

"Privatisation is the most important feature of Russia's economic transformation," London economist Richard Layard told a Moscow news conference.

"By the end of July, 20 per cent of industrial workers were

in newly privatised firms, which means something between three and four per cent of Russian firms is being privatised every month. This is the fastest privatisation in human history," he pointed out.

Figures released by the government Centre for Economic Reforms showed Russia had privatised 78,000 companies by the end of July, sales which had brought in 633 billion roubles (\$540 million).

In June 72,000 firms had been handed over to private hands, while the figure was just 12,015 in July last year, before Russia's privatisation drive moved into top gear.

Russia has distributed special privatisation cheques to every man, woman and child in the country in its privatisation campaign. The vouchers, with a face value of 10,000 roubles (\$8.50), can be sold or swapped for shares in state-owned firms.

and then you will be able to get off with a fellow associate of original ideas for better tasks done.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Fix up your home early so it is more attractive and then you will be able to get off to places of recreation, entertainment and have a fine time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 22) Send messages that will please some usual companions and then you can invite some extraordinary persons into your home and entertain them successfully.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Think about what you can do to improve the value of your property after which you can get in touch with persons and gain data helpful to you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You awaken with benign feeling of well-being and can express yourself as you wish while later get into ways to put modern ideas into your business.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can devise a plan in the morning to do what pleases your close friends and the afternoon and evening finds you able to do just that.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 18) Back up a friend who a project of importance and then you can get into the intimate aspects of your own desires and make them work for you.

OPEC president urges adherence to quota to fight new energy taxes

HOUSTON (R) — After agreeing to a six-month output accord at its recent meeting, OPEC member countries will likely turn their attention towards the group's deep-rooted opposition to new energy taxes, OPEC President Jean Ping said Thursday.

The group's member countries should adhere to the new output ceiling of 24.5 million barrels per day (b/d) to help combat talks of new energy taxes, he said in an interview.

"Our objective is not to have low prices that will help them to impose new taxes," said Mr. Ping, who was in Houston to invite bids for Gabon's seventh exploration licensing round.

"Having low crude oil prices will help them to implement their taxes," said Mr. Ping, the energy minister of Gabon. But he did not speculate how OPEC would respond to new taxes.

The issue of energy taxes took on greater importance this week after European

Community (EC) Environment Commissioner Yannis Paleokrassas tried to attract four hold-out countries into backing a carbon tax by offering them temporary exemptions.

The attempt to include Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland among the member supporters received favourable reaction from the countries, he told reporters after the meeting in Brussels.

Six nations back the tax, while France has said it does not oppose it.

But Great Britain, a hold-out, may be given an "opt-out" option since no EC decision can be made without Britain's vote since all tax regulations require unanimous council backing.

OPEC officials have expressed opposition to the proposed EC carbon tax, as well as the recent U.S. petrol tax hike. Mr. Ping said more pressing issues for the 12-member

group have taken higher priority than tax issues, but he said OPEC member countries will soon likely raise the profile of the issue.

"This is a permanent preoccupation of OPEC," he said of the energy tax proposals, also reiterating comments made earlier this week that he believed the OPEC accord would be respected.

OPEC previously told its members in February to honour their allocations to make it harder for cash-strapped nations to impose new carbon taxes on oil as a way to raise revenue.

And a speech by Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Hisham Nazir earlier this year in Houston also criticised the new taxes.

OPEC officials have expressed opposition to the proposed EC carbon tax, as well as the recent U.S. petrol tax hike. Mr. Ping said more pressing issues for the 12-member

Clarke points to higher taxes to attack £50 billion British budget deficit

BLACKPOOL, England (R) — Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke Thursday gave his clearest signal yet that he will raise in his Nov. 30 budget to attack Britain's £50 billion (\$75 billion) budget deficit.

While formally keeping his options open, Mr. Clarke prepared the right wing of the ruling Conservative Party for distasteful tax rises by noting even former leader Margaret Thatcher had found

spending cuts were not always the answer to everything.

"As Margaret Thatcher discovered in her courageous budget of 1981, when the first priority is to balance the books, tight control over public spending is not always enough. The key question for me to decide ... is whether we have done enough," Mr. Clarke said in the keynote economic debate at the party's annual conference.

With the former prime

minister sharing the same platform, Mr. Clarke's message to right-wingers was loud and clear — back me on taxes and do not prompt another split in a party still licking its wounds after a civil war over European policy.

Minutes after Mr. Clarke sat down, his predecessor, Norman Lamont, was also citing Mrs. Thatcher's 1981 budget and coming to the opposite conclusion — spending cuts, not higher taxes, were needed

such a large tax increase once a decade, it is completely unrealistic to have two within the space of nine months," he declared.

Mr. Lamont, sacked in May, continued: "If we want to reduce borrowing more quickly, spending cuts are better than raising taxes. A billion pounds (\$1.5 billion) off spending is worth more than a billion pounds on taxes."

"Urge the government to cut spending on social security,

health and education, Mr. Lamont said this year's spending limits were tight only for those used to big increases year after year.

"The party, the government and the country must understand that those years are over," he said.

"Further substantial tax rises would retard recovery, slow growth, abort job creation, penalise success and stifle endeavour," he said.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Consider advanced aims with the assistance of those you have recently met then you will be able to put more pizzazz into your outside activities.

gemini: (May 21 to June 21) Pay any obligations with a flare so that your creditors, shopkeepers, etc. appreciate your style, then you can get off to interesting new activities.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Charm an outside associate by doing something that appeals to this person, then you can show your inquire ability at a business undertaking.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Let an associate know how much you appreciate being allied with that person, then you can get out and make contact with a progressive individual.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 18) Back up a friend who a project of importance and then you can get into the intimate aspects of your own desires and make them work for you.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can devise a plan in the morning to do what pleases your close friends and the afternoon and evening finds you able to do just that.

Capricorn: (December 22 to January 20) You awaken with benign feeling of well-being and can express yourself as you wish while later get into ways to put modern ideas into your business.

Scorpio: (October 23 to November 22) Send messages that will please some usual companions and then you can invite some extraordinary persons into your home and entertain them successfully.

Sagittarius: (November 23 to December 22) Fix up your home early so it is more attractive and then you will be able to get off to places of recreation, entertainment and have a fine time.

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Georgia joins CIS as Yeltsin meets with Caucasus leaders

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze announced Friday that Georgia would join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), after he and other Transcaucasus leaders met with President Boris Yeltsin in a bid to end the bloodshed in their troubled region.

In a joint statement issued after their meeting, Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Shevardnadze and the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan vowed to seek the help of international organisations to restore peace in their countries.

Georgia's decision to join the Russian-dominated alliance grouping most of the 15 former Soviet republics comes just two weeks after the same move by Azerbaijan, another state in the Transcaucasus wracked by war and economic hardship.

Georgia's entrance into the CIS would theoretically allow Tbilisi to call on Russian troops to defend its borders under a 1992 collective security treaty. But the membership must still be approved by the Georgian parliament.

Mr. Shevardnadze had

stated once before his readiness to join the CIS as rebel separatists in Georgia's Abkhazia region were about to seize the local capital Sukhumi.

But he rejected the move after Russia refused to send troops to quash the rebels' advance and the city fell, followed by most of the rest of Abkhazia.

On Thursday Mr. Shevardnadze was quoted by teletext as declaring: "I have decided to present Georgia's membership in the CIS... I am sure that this step will benefit Georgia."

With Georgian membership, the CIS would group all the former Soviet republics except the three Baltic states and Moldova, whose president strongly supports membership but whose parliament has not yet ratified the move.

In a joint statement released by the Kremlin, leaders of Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia agreed "on the need to take urgent steps to end the bloodshed" and restore peace to the Transcaucasus.

The region has been a hotbed of ethnic conflicts in-

cluding a five-year undeclared war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, the war in Abkhazia and smaller conflicts in South Ossetia, Ingushetia and Chechnya.

The leaders proclaimed their "resolve to act in strict accordance with the goals and principles of the U.N." and in line with the mediation efforts of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

"The participants at the meeting envisage a way out of the crisis situation in the Caucasus through coordination of efforts... and the implementation of measures aimed at ending the armed conflicts," the joint statement said.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian described the talks between the four leaders as "absolutely open," adding that much of the discussion focused on Georgia.

Armenia signed the collective security treaty at a CIS summit meeting in Tashkent in May 1992 and was a founding member of the CIS following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (left) welcomes his Georgian counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze during a meeting at the Kremlin Friday (AFP photo)

Moscow-brokered truce.

Georgia has accused Russia of helping separatists in Abkhazia to break away, a charge Moscow denies.

Mr. Shevardnadze, fighting for his political survival, has now dropped his earlier charges against Russia.

The pro-Gamsakhurdia fighters also seized a Russian armoured personnel carrier during the attack in Khoti. They have captured nine

towns and districts in western Georgia since Mr. Gamsakhurdia, nationalist former dissident, returned from exile last month to launch a revolt to overthrow Mr. Shevardnadze.

Georgia's main Black Sea port of Poti fell to his forces last month and they are now just outside the town of Samtskhe, about 25 kilometres west of Kutaisi, Georgia's second biggest city and regional centre.

S. African soldiers kill 5 youths in raid on 'rebel base'

PRETORIA (AFP) — South African troops killed five black youths from the same family, aged between 12 and 19, when they raided the home of a member of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) Friday in

Transkei, the PAC said.

The South African Defence Force (SADF) claimed the house in the black homeland's capital of Umtata was a base for the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the PAC's guerrilla army headquarters in Tanzania.

An SADF statement said five people were killed in the dawn raid in the nominally independent homeland after they "offered resistance," but did not give the ages of the dead.

PAC Deputy President Johnson Mlambo said the victims — 16-year-old twins, their 12-year-old brother and two cousins, aged 19 and 12 — were asleep when they were shot in the head with Uzi sub-machine guns.

"There exists no evidence

whatsoever that there was resistance from the sleeping schoolchildren," he said at a press conference.

The house was never an APLA base. There were no weapons in the house nor any files belonging to the PAC or APLA."

PAC spokesman Waters Tobe said the father of the three brothers, Siselo Mpendulo, was the owner of the house and a member of the PAC, but that he and his wife were away at the time of the raid.

Mr. Mpendulo told the South African Press Association in Umtata that his children and their cousins had no links with the PAC.

A correspondent for the East Cape News Agency (ECNA) reported that the bodies of the five victims were laid out in the blood spattered lounge of the home. A trail of blood led to a bedroom and there were signs that the front door had been forced open.

On Thursday, French President Francois Mitterrand called on the European Community (EC), the United Nations and other groups to take urgent measures to ensure the delivery of relief supplies for war victims.

Mr. Mitterrand also blamed the continuing bloodshed on the EC's delay in ratifying the Maastricht Treaty aimed at creating a common foreign policy and fostering eventual defence cooperation.

Cambodian troops drive towards Khmer Rouge northern stronghold

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian government troops have begun a "significant" offensive into the northern stronghold of Anlong Veng, the base of notorious Khmer Rouge General Ta Mok near the border with Thailand, government and diplomatic sources said Friday.

Government troops have advanced to within 10 kilometres of Anlong Veng from the south and west, but the advance was slowed by rain and resulting muddy road conditions, one Western diplomatic source said.

"The resumption of nuclear testing, if any, at Mururoa will be a political decision from the highest level of the state, which is President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur," the spokesman said.

Government troops had to make financial provisions for tests until any formal ban was introduced, the spokesman said.

"I would call it quite significant," he said.

Deputy Defence Minister General Tea Banh told AFP that about five divisions of unspecified strengths were involved in the fighting, and that troops captured two villages, Cheung and Otpao, defend-

ing the Anlong Veng stronghold.

The Khmer Rouge are attacking throughout the area, and the government is pushing them back," the general said.

He did not have casualty figures.

The diplomatic sources said the government began the attack last week as part of its declared policy of using both military and diplomatic means to counter the Khmer Rouge.

Reports from Thailand indicated that Cambodian troops hoped to seize the area by Sunday.

Anlong Veng, with about 1,500 guerrillas defending, is one of the most fortified areas of Cambodia. General Ta Mok directs and resupplies all divisions operating in northern and central Cambodia above the Tonle Sap Lake, including the embattled Kompong Thom

Council of Europe opens summit

VIENNA (AFP) — Political turmoil in Russia, war in the former Yugoslavia and the rights of ethnic minorities headed the agenda Friday as leaders from 32 European states opened a two-day East-West summit.

They gathered the first top-level meeting of the Council of Europe since it was formed 44 years ago to protect human rights in a now-bygone cold war tensions.

Now the Council, based in Strasbourg, France, is trying to address the volatile mosaic of ethnic and national tensions that is plaguing efforts to build a new economic and security order in Europe.

Officials said the conference centerpiece would be a Vienna Declaration on Peace and Stability in Europe, including the question of human rights.

But the gathering was also expected to produce statements of support for Russia's democratic reforms and perhaps a new appeal for action to end the suffering in the former Yugoslavia.

As the meeting opened, Russian President Boris Yeltsin renewed his country's call for admission into the club of democratic nations following his showdown Monday with Moscow hardliners.

Mr. Yeltsin sent a message here lobbying for Russia's membership in the Council of Europe, citing what he called Moscow's "irreversible policy of reforms and democratic transformations."

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Spoletto trims programme for '94

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — The Spoleto Festival U.S.A., which has lost money for two straight years, will present fewer performances during the 1994 season, the arts festival has announced. The festival, founded by composer Gian Carlo Menotti, will be cut to 12 days and around 100 events. Last year's festival presented 118 performances during a 17-day run. "This is a step on the road to meeting our financial challenges," Marcus Overton, the festival's executive director, said. "Far from being in trouble, we are responding in a responsible way."

Mr. Overton said cutting the festival by five days would save at least \$500,000. Next year's budget is expected to be about \$3.8 million. "Because of the economic slump that is everywhere, everybody is cutting down on things. I don't think it is time for us to celebrate in an extravagant way."

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Bosnian focus shifts to fighting 'barbarism'

SARAJEVO (R) — Fresh allegations of barbarities in former Yugoslavia overshadowed peace efforts as Bosnia's president said Muslims could never accept the latest Geneva plan to end the violence.

U.N. officials accused Croats of conducting a "scorched earth" policy against Serb villages in Croatia and said they had also mistreated Muslims in the disputed Bosnian city of Mostar.

Fighting was reported in central Bosnia and shelling and sniping was noticeably more intense in the republic's besieged capital, Sarajevo, which had recently enjoyed relative peace.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, addressing the U.N. General Assembly in New York Thursday, explained why his Muslim-dominated parliament had effectively rejected a peace plan dividing Bosnia into three ethnic statelets.

He said the republic was being subjected to "political vivisection" and repeated demands that the Serbs and Croats must give back more land than promised under the peace package.

The unjust peace plan is flawed because it is based upon the repugnant and historically failed concept of ethnic partition and apartheid," he said.

Mr. Izetbegovic told reporters later that the United States would have to take part in any

Nuclear test ban vital — N. Zealand premier

WELLINGTON (AFP) — New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger said Friday that continuing the informal nuclear-test ban was "absolutely vital," in response to reports that France might resume its testing program.

Mr. Bolger said he was encouraged that it was now French President Francois Mitterrand who was suggesting an immediate resumption of nuclear testing at France's Mururoa Atoll, which is about 5,000 kilometres (3,000 miles) northeast of New Zealand.

But French Defence Minister Francois Leotard, indicated this week that his nation may soon have to resume testing.

However, a spokesman at the French embassy here said Friday that Mr. Leotard's comments were made in the context of presenting his budget.

This budget had to make financial provisions for tests until any formal ban was introduced, the spokesman said.

"The resumption of nuclear

testing, if any, at Mururoa will be a political decision from the highest level of the state, which is President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur," the spokesman said.

Government troops have advanced to within 10 kilometres of Anlong Veng from the south and west, but the advance was slowed by rain and resulting muddy road conditions, one Western diplomatic source said.

"I would call it quite significant," he said.

Deputy Defence Minister General Tea Banh told AFP that about five divisions of unspecified strengths were involved in the fighting, and that troops captured two villages, Cheung and Otpao, defend-

ing the Anlong Veng stronghold.

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What's next for Jordan?

CHICAGO (AP) — Can a man who knows how to fly learn how to walk behind a lawnmower? Michael Jordan says he can — and will. But what else is in the air for a man who has thrilled millions?

"I'm capable of relaxing," the former Chicago Bulls superstar said, smiling.

Jordan's personal scheduler, Barbara Allen, said Thursday that relaxation might one day come easy for the player who took only nine years to score 21,541 points in the NBA.

"He's not going to cut back at all," Allen said from the Washington offices of Jordan's agent, David Falk. "Obviously, the only thing he's left is the NBA. He's always kept very busy off the court."

Jordan didn't have many explanations for life after the bimonthly Wednesday, when he announced his retirement from pro basketball.

Time with his family; some golf, pickup games, and pro basketball as a spectator sport were among his thoughts about the future.

"I'm going to watch the grass grow, and I'm going to have 'cut it,'" Jordan said.

But with an estimated \$28 million in commercial endorsements and numerous charitable commitments at stake, the 30-year-old Jordan may find himself calling the kid next door for help with the lawn.

"He has 12 long-term endorsement deals; he'll do commercial filming," Allen said. "Hopefully he'll be even more of a spokesman for Nike, Wilson Sporting Goods and Gatorade."

Jordan undoubtedly will continue to indulge in his second sporting love, golf — a suggestion that some fellow duffers found alarming.

Jordan hopes leaving basketball also will lessen the high-intensity celebrity status that has kept him from leading a normal life.

His friend and competitor, Charles Barkley, said the self-imposed isolation was a heavy piece of Jordan's celebrity baggage.

"One thing that was weird about Michael is that whenever we're together, we're in a hotel room because he doesn't ever go out," the Phoenix Suns star said. "So I don't ever want to be in that predicament — where I can't go out and do anything."

Allen said it's too soon to map Jordan's next stage of life. "We've not even started to focus on the things we'll do immediately," she said.

But Jordan seemed convinced the gap he created by walking away from basketball



Chicago Bulls basketball star Michael Jordan throws out the first pitch of the American League Basketball Championship Series Oct. 5 (AFP photo)

was a gap that will be easily filled.

"If I get a pot belly, then I start exercising," Jordan said.

Gambling probe a factor in Jordan retirement

It was the question that never came up: was the NBA's investigation into Jordan's gambling a contributing factor in his decision to retire?

The answer is no, at least for now because NBA commissioner David Stern said the ongoing investigation wasn't finished and Jordan wasn't informed of any of the findings before he announced his retirement.

Stern said there was "absolutely no connection" between the probe and the retirement, telling the Washington Post: "The investigation was nearly complete. We had a meeting scheduled but we deferred it because of this. Michael said he would still come in because he wants the loop to be completed."

Jordan did contact Stern Tuesday to tell him of his decision to retire, NBA spokesman Jan Hubbard said.

Jordan said Wednesday he was leaving the NBA after nine seasons with the Chicago Bulls because he had nothing left to prove and was no longer "hungry." He also said he was moving toward retiring even before the murder of his father two months ago.

But it's the league's gambling probe that still follows Jordan. And until it's addressed

by the NBA or Jordan, the speculation will continue. With his retirement, even if the NBA discovered problems with Jordan's off-court activities, the league is powerless to do anything.

The most recent gambling problems began during this year's playoffs. In May, during the Eastern Conference finals against the New York Knicks, Jordan and his father spent a night gambling at Atlantic City, arriving back in New York the morning of game 2. There was such a fiasco over the trip that Jordan didn't speak to reporters for nearly two weeks.

Before the NBA finals, though, Jordan responded to a book by San Diego businessman Richard Esquinas, who claimed Jordan lost \$1.25 million to him and they had negotiated a \$300,000 settlement.

At that point, the NBA began an investigation into Jordan's gambling on golf and cards. The league also investigated Jordan in 1992 after a bail bondsman was found shot to death with checks from Jordan totalling more than \$200,000. There also were allegations that Jordan bet and associated with high-stakes gamblers, including James Boulter, a convicted cocaine dealer.

Jordan settled one gambling debt with Boulter with a \$7,000 check and the NBA investigation ended after three weeks with no action taken.

There is no timetable when the current investigation into Jordan's gambling will be completed.

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Moscow emergency could continue as Yeltsin moves to weed out challengers

Combined agency dispatches

MOSCOW — Moscow's state of emergency could be extended a week to Oct. 17, said the Interfax news agency Friday citing officials, as the capital's military commander warned of a tough response if weekend protests in the capital were to degenerate.

General Alexander Kulikov, in charge of enforcing the state of emergency, warned that any groups "aiming to destabilise the situation in Moscow will be firmly crushed," Itar-Tass reported.

Mr. Kulikov's office said an extension of the state of emergency was needed to round up armed hardliners who escaped the battered Russian parliament when troops loyal to President Boris Yeltsin crushed parliament-led rebellion, Interfax reported.

However, a final decision on prolonging the state of emergency — decreed five days ago at the height of the insurrection against Yeltsin's decision to dissolve the legislature — has yet to be taken, Gen. Kulikov's office said.

An 11:00 p.m. (2000 GMT) to 5:00 a.m. curfew in Moscow is still in force.

In a separate development the Justice Ministry announced the suspension Friday of imprisoned Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi's People's Party of Free Russia and of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Interfax reported.

The decision followed reports from Gen. Kulikov's office and the Russian public prosecutor's office, the agency said.

On Tuesday Free Russia, jointly headed by Rutskoi and Vasily Lipitski, severely criticised Mr. Rutskoi's role in the bloody rebellion in which around 170 people died.

Mr. Rutskoi was arrested along with Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov after the rebellion collapsed following a tank-backed army assault on the Parliament Monday.

On Tuesday the Justice Ministry suspended the activi-

ties of 16 Communist and ultra-nationalist parties.

A senior aide of Mr. Yeltsin said that Russia's main Communist Party should be banned from December elections and warned conservative regional councils against defying the president's emergency rule.

Sergei Filatov, chief of Mr. Yeltsin's personal administration, said the Communist Party had discredited itself in last Nov. 5.

He said the state of emergency, formally due to expire on Sunday, "would not last long." He did not explicitly say it would be extended.

Police were using it to the maximum to round up criminal gangs and crack down on armed groups still at liberty after the rebellion, he said.

Mr. Filatov told a news conference: "My feeling is that those who took part in the action should not participate in these elections."

Asked about the absence of the Communist Party from a list of eight suspended by Mr. Yeltsin for the duration of a state of emergency in Moscow, Mr. Filatov replied:

"If the party is not there, then perhaps another, separate order should be issued."

Communist party leader Gennady Zyuganov backed parliament in the conflict with Mr. Yeltsin. But unlike radical communist Viktor Anpilov and nationalist Ilya Konstantinov, he played no conspicuous role in the violence.

Mr. Filatov called on Mr. Konstantinov and Deputy Parliament Chairman Yuri Voronin, on the run since pro-Yeltsin forces stormed the legislature's White House headquarters on Monday, to surrender to the authorities.

Mr. Anpilov was arrested by security ministry agents at a country house south of Moscow on Thursday.

Mr. Rutskoi and Mr. Khasbulatov, who accuse Mr. Yeltsin of dictatorial ambitions, are now being held in Moscow's Lefortovo prison.

Mr. Filatov said he was convinced that December elections called by Mr. Yeltsin will find the format in which the court will operate."

U.N.-Iraq talks to resume in November

MANAMA (Agencies) — High-level talks between Iraq and the United Nations will resume in New York in mid-November to try to eliminate obstacles to the lifting of sanctions, senior U.N. official Rolf Ekeus said on Friday.

Mr. Ekeus told reporters after concluding a week of talks in Baghdad that Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz would go to New York for the talks.

"We're in agreement that this is an... important process," said Mr. Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) entrusted with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction under the terms of the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire.

The U.N. Security Council is awaiting a clean bill of health from UNSCOM before deciding on lifting the oil embargo on Iraq, which on Thursday offered to answer U.N. questions of weapons procurement (see page 2).

Mr. Ekeus said the U.N. side would try to use the talks in November to tie up some of the "loose ends" and speed up the process of ensuring that Iraq both has no more prohibited weapons and is committed to long-term U.N. monitoring.

Before leaving Baghdad, Mr. Ekeus said it was still too early to say that Iraq was complying fully with the weapons terms of the ceasefire — the main condition for a lifting of sanctions in force since shortly after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Addressing reporters here, Mr. Ekeus said there was "considerable progress" on Iraqi compliance with other long-standing demands contained in Gulf war ceasefire resolutions.

But Mr. Ekeus also said Iraq continued to balk at open acknowledgement of Security Council Resolution 715, which is one of the conditions set by the council for lifting the embargo.

The resolution calls for a long-term monitoring plan.

Major speech seen to patch up Tories

BLACKPOOL (AFP) — Britain's Conservatives, in four days of fractious debate and fraternal fence-mending, managed to regain a semblance of unity with a sharp swing to the right that played heavily on what Prime Minister John Major termed "a return to old core values."

In 63-minute speech that earned him an 11-minute standing ovation, Mr. Major mongered get-tough tactics with criminals and European neighbours alike.

"I must say to some of our European colleagues," who are dragging their feet in world trade talks, "you're playing with fire. Or, to put it more bluntly, 'get your tractors off our lawn.'

He hammered out a right-wing domestic platform of return to law-and-order, family values, and one effective public education.

"We have allowed things to happen that we should never have tolerated," he said.

"Some said the family was out of date... others told us criminal behaviour was society's fault... it was fashionable... but wrong, wrong, wrong."

"He's back on the right-wing agenda and we're going to make sure he stays with us," said Conor Burns, an elated delegate from Southampton.

Graham O'Hare from Lancashire said the conference "as a whole had succeeded in building party unity."

"There was no blood in the aisles as people were predicting."

Mr. Major delivered a "good speech," he said. "Good, but not brilliant. He's not a brilliant orator. He's not Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher had 80 per cent of the party who would have died for her. But Major demonstrated that the party can deliver. And that's what matters."

"He demonstrated he is not only the best leader this country could possibly have at the present," said Tony Slater of Lancaster, "but also that he is the best leader this country has ever had."

"We are even more united now than we have been for years," he said.

"Like all families from time to time we have our squabbles," he said.

opinion poll ratings after a year of bitter intercine squabbling that had raised the spectre of a leadership challenge, Major hammered home at the rightward direction set by ministers earlier in the week.

Home Secretary Michael Howard set the law-and-order theme with a vow to abolish criminals' right to silence and give police tough new search and seizure powers.

Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley promised to crack down on welfare cheats.

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke committed to tightening government purse string, imposed a spending freeze and made clear the controversial new value added tax (VAT) on home heating, a volatile issue at the start of the conference, would not be reversed.

The tax, to take effect next year and bring in an estimated £3 billion (£4.5 billion), is needed, he said, to help trim Britain's £50 billion (£75 billion) national debt.

"It is time to return to the old core values... to self-discipline and respect for the law... and more conservatism," Mr. Major declared to thunderous applause from the 1,500 delegates.

"We have listened too often and too long to people whose ideas are light years away from common sense."

Mr. Major dealt too with the ticklish issue that effectively clouded much of the conference.

The publication of extracts from former Premier Margaret Thatcher's memoirs in which she purportedly calls him "politically naive," "small-minded" and "an intellectual lightweight."

The remarks published in the Daily Mirror newspaper referred to the period when Mr. Major was Mrs. Thatcher's chancellor of the exchequer.

"I am not about to write my memoirs," said Mr. Major. "I can tell you now, straight away, precisely what I think of my cabinet. They're a first-class team. They're steady under fire. They're united and they're serving Britain superbly."

Other panelists were U.S. Representative Christopher Cox, (Republican from California); Farid Abboud, consul general of Lebanon in Los Angeles; and Dr. Michael van Dusen, chief of staff of the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Indyk said U.S. policy on Lebanon is closely linked to the peace process, and the



Palestinian women with pictures of their imprisoned sons are among a few hundred Jews and Arabs demonstrating in Nablus Thursday for the immediate release of thousands of Palestinians held by Israel in prisons in the occupied territories and in Israel (AFP photo)

Israel said to have agreed to free upto 6,000 detainees

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials are preparing a list of up to 6,000 Palestinians to be released from Israeli detention after Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agreed to free prisoners during a meeting with PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat in Cairo, Palestinian sources said Friday.

The court had brought the country "to the brink of civil war," Mr. Yeltsin said Thursday in announcing its suspension.

It had become a political weapon and its chairman, Valery Zorkin, had abused his position by participating in politics, Mr. Yeltsin added.

The president's remarks were seen as a reference to the several decisions taken by the court in support of the conservative-dominated parliament in its power struggle with Mr. Yeltsin.

The court's interim chairman, Nikolai Vitruk, admitted that the court had become an "organ of political struggle rather than an organ of justice."

"President Yeltsin has not abandoned the idea of such a democratic institution (as a constitutional court)," Mr. Vitruk said. "It is a matter of finding the format in which the court will operate."

Published by several Arabic-language dailies in Jerusalem.

According to the source, an agreement was made three weeks ago among all "security" prisoners held in Israeli jails, particularly those from the occupied Gaza Strip, where Hamas, the most vocal opponent of the Israel-PLO accord, is very active.

More than 12,000 Palestinians are believed to be held in Israeli jails. Mr. Rabin's promise to release half of them was seen as aimed at ensuring that hardline Hamas activists would not be let loose in the streets of the occupied territories to undermine the autonomy accord, which takes effect Oct. 13.

The source could not say when the prisoners could be released, but said that the Israeli move could come on Oct. 13 or 14, "provided that PLO and Israeli officials could finalise a list."

During his meeting with Mr. Rabin on Wednesday, Mr. Arafat specifically mentioned Ahmad Yassin, a crippled sheikh who is serving a life sentence in Israel after convicted of inciting his Hamas followers to kill Israeli soldiers.

It was not known whether

Sheikh Yassin's name appears on a list being drawn up by the Israelis, said another source, adding that the list was reported to be dominated by members of Fatah and other PLO factions which support the autonomy accord.

"There will have to be a lot of reconciliation between the two lists," said the source. "It seems that the Israelis are

legitimate references to the Soviet Union, removing sanctions against South Africa, enabling assistance to flow to the West Bank and Gaza and allowing the PLO to have offices in Washington, he said.

Responding to questions on why more U.S. assistance is not allocated to strengthen progress in rebuilding Lebanon, Mr. Van Dusen said that Syria also remains a factor in Lebanon's future.

"I believe there is real cause for optimism about the events on the White House lawn Sept. 13... and those events will impact on Lebanon's future," he said.

"The Palestinians have taken their fate into their own hands, have reached an agreement with Israel which answers that question—and that opens the way for movement towards settlements on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks."

Dr. Indyk strongly discounted recent reports in the Lebanese press that President Bill Clinton "somehow believes that peace is possible without Syria or without Lebanon."

"That is not the policy of this administration," Dr. Indyk declared. "On the contrary—what we see is that the Israel-PLO agreement can serve—as must serve—as a catalyst for a wider peace."

Dr. Indyk said that the administration made clear in its invitation to the governments of Lebanon and Syria that it sees the fund-raising conference to support Middle East peace as "a first step," and as Lebanon and Syria reach agreements with Israel, "we see the conference for Middle East peace as a vehicle to provide financial, political backing for their agreements as well."

Dr. Michael van Dusen said legislation before the House Foreign Affairs Committee reflects "how much the world situation is changing," and how many changes are interrelated. The Congress is deleting

the "blanket ban" on travel to Lebanon to appear to be "more politically than security motivated..." It sends the wrong signal," he said.

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